

# FRIENDS IN STRANGE GARMENTS



ANNA MILO UPJOHN

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## FRIENDS IN STRANGE GARMENTS

*By Anna Milo Upjohn*

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IN the sixteen stories which make up this charming book, Miss Upjohn gives vivid pictures of child life in foreign lands. Rahmeh, the little girl of Palestine, with her camel; Rastem, the boy of Albania, and his friend Marco; Zorka, the pig girl of Montenegro; Michel, the fisher-boy of Brittany; and each of the others are active, living characters, with picturesque costumes and interesting, unfamiliar ways.

Writing after long experience while working for the Red Cross, she has been able to make her stories so true to life that they will give their young readers a better knowledge of other countries than they will get from their studies, and so interesting that they will read and re-read them with unfailing delight.

*Lavishly illustrated in color and  
black and white by the author.*

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FRIENDS  
IN  
STRANGE  
GARMENTS



ANNA MILO  
UPJOHN















THE BLUE BEAD WAS A CHARM AGAINST THE EVIL EYE (*page 2*)



# Friends in Strange Garments

BY  
ANNA MILO UPJOHN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY THE AUTHOR



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## INTRODUCTION

WHEN we go into foreign countries we eagerly look for those things that differ from our own, and if we do not find oddities in dress, food, buildings, and customs we are disappointed. But we are also disappointed if we do not meet, in the people, the honesty and kindliness that we expect from friends. We look for differences in surroundings, but for likenesses in people. We wish to find in people the traits that will make us feel at home among strangers in a strange land. We wish to find friends even though they are in strange garments.

The pictures in this book were drawn with the purpose of showing differences in externals among peoples of different nations. The stories were written to bring home to us the likeness in heart among the boys and girls of the world. A young Arab pommels his donkey's sides for joy because he is going on a holiday in Jerusalem. A girl of Italy shares her Easter cake with a friend who has none. An orphan boy with younger brothers and sisters dependent upon him does his very best for them in Poland as in the United States.

If most of the pictures were made from children in



poor circumstances, or from those living in rural districts, it is because the war left the countries of Europe greatly impoverished, and because the beautiful old costumes and habits are rapidly passing from city life and are to be found only in out-of-the-way places. More and more the differences among the children of the world are vanishing, while the likenesses are growing.

The year 1916 found Miss Upjohn, artist of child life and author of these stories, in Europe as a volunteer relief worker. She once remarked that the only time in her life when she had enough children to suit her was when she was daily serving breakfast to four hundred soldier boys in a Red Cross canteen in London. Later she served in France with the *Fraternité Américaine* and with the Fund for War Devastated Villages. While with the latter, during the German offensive of March, 1918, she helped to evacuate villages in the Canton of Rossières, near Montdidier, Somme. For her service in this connection she was decorated by the French Government. But there are memories which the author treasures even more than this — of the day, for example, when, after two years' absence, she went back to one of those villages in the Somme and arrived to find the entire population celebrating a requiem for their fallen. Slipping into the church, she took a seat on a bench near

the door, but the curé, recognizing her, came forward from the altar and asked her to come up among them because of all that they had been through together. 'Such things made me feel,' said Miss Upjohn, 'that they regarded me as one of themselves, in sympathy at least.'

During the stress of this time, when often the inhabitants left their villages from one side while the opposing forces were entering from the other, she was deeply impressed by the pluck and helpfulness of the French children. A year later, while she was with the Red Cross Commission in Czecho-Slovakia, the same spirit among the Czech children, coupled with an active sympathy on their part for others in distress, revealed to her the latent power for peace in the children of the world, needing only the threads of contact to bring about widespread understanding.

No wonder, then, that when, in 1920, she was asked to enter the service of the American Junior Red Cross, she accepted. She was commissioned first to portray child life in those European countries which had been beneficiaries of the service of the children of America. She has since remained continuously with this organization, traveling widely, indeed encircling the globe, in behalf of world-wide understanding among children. The work of

## Introduction

her pen and brush has been an important factor in the development of that children's 'league of friendship' which now includes in its membership ten million boys and girls in the schools of forty nations.

The stories in this book do not tell of children's sufferings. They bring before our eyes the children of many nations in their everyday surroundings, everywhere bravely and hopefully living and learning. Some of the stories are quite true; and all of them have a kernel of truth around which the artist-author, with the help of very real children, has built them.

Wherever it was known that the drawings were to take some message or story to the children of America, there was a scramble to get into the picture. Often a poor child would refuse to take payment for posing: 'No, no, I want to do it for *Them!*' Perhaps a boy had received a Christmas box or a letter; perhaps a girl had known the unfamiliar comfort of hot food or warm shoes during the pinched days of the war; or perhaps they had simply heard that other children of their country, poorer than themselves, had been helped.

'It was a stirring thing to find,' said Miss Upjohn, 'that even in remote spots of the Balkans there existed an image of American school-children as something bright, kind, and companionable. In the heart of many



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a growing boy and girl in Albania or France or Czecho-Slovakia the sympathy of American children is being repaid a thousandfold in the golden gift of Friendship.'

ARTHUR W. DUNN

*National Director*

*American Junior Red Cross*



# Friends in Strange Garments



## IN THE WILDERNESS

RAHMEH's mother brought the smoking dish of mutton and cauliflower from the clay brazier where it had been cooking over a fire of thorns, and placed it in the middle of the rug, on a large round straw tray. Then she laid a little flat loaf of bread at each place and clapped her hands to call the family to their meal.

Yussef and his father came in quickly, but Rahmeh stayed outside to feed Nib, the camel, with the cauliflower leaves that she had saved for him.

Nib was Rahmeh's pet, and the great awkward beast followed the little girl about like a lamb. He was on his knees now, tied down to a peg in the ground to prevent his wandering away. His melancholy, drooping eyes watched the little figure coming toward him with hands full of green; his loose gray lips trembled wistfully and his teeth slid slowly back and forth as he moved his jaws in anticipation. Close on Rahmeh's heels came Jeida, her little donkey, thrusting his nose over her shoulder and sniffing enviously at the fresh leaves which



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Nib tucked under his long lips. He looked on sulkily as Rahmeh tied a blue bead to Nib's collar and patted his head, which felt like a mat of spongy moss. The blue bead was a charm against the evil eye in the great city, where so many strange and perhaps envious people might look at Nib as he threaded his way through the crowded streets; for he was about to make a journey up to Jerusalem with his master and Yussef.

Rahmeh and Jeida longed for a real adventure like going to Jerusalem. Sometimes they made short trips to the orange groves of Jericho, or, with a load of vegetables, to the British soldiers encamped on the shore of the Dead Sea; but usually they herded sheep in the gullies.

Now Rahmeh helped her brother Yussef prepare for the journey. She brought a long coat to put over his white cotton garment. It was of striped black and yellow and reached to his heels; a girdle of wine-colored wool fastened it at the waist.

'You must take your *abyah*, too, Yussef,' said his mother, 'it will be snowing, up in Jerusalem.'

Yussef, looking up at the hot, blue sky, which stretched over the Jordan Valley, laughed incredulously. But he took the *abyah*, or woolen cloak, from its peg, hoping that his mother might be right about the snow. It would add another excitement to the trip.

His father was already loading Nib with sacks of fruit and nuts. From the saddle hung beautiful bags richly woven by the children's mother. Into these she now stuffed bread and cheese and figs for the journey. At last they were off over the white road that slipped away among the folded hills, ashen gray, dun and blue, soft as the wings of a dove.

Diab, the children's father, was a rich man. Besides the orange grove on the Plain of Jericho, he owned large flocks of sheep and goats. In his house were fine rugs and great bins for grain, reaching nearly to the ceiling. The grain was poured in at the top and taken out through a round hole near the bottom. Diab had rings of silver and of gold, and his wife, the children's mother, had such a weight of coins on her headdress that it made her head ache. On ordinary days she laid it aside and wore imitation ornaments, which were lighter. Rahmeh, too, had a string of coins across her forehead, and chains of silver, which, fastened to her cap in front of her ears, swung down under her chin.

Her mother had made her a little jacket of purple velvet embroidered with orange, and her skirt was worked with bands of flowers.

That night Ismail, the big brother, said: 'Rahmeh, you will have to go with me to the hills to-morrow.

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There are too many little lambs for me to look after them alone.'

Rahmeh was delighted. She rode her own little donkey, Jeida, and carried a pocketful of dates and bread. Jeida was chubby and serious; like his mistress, he went unshod, and, like her, he wore gorgeous raiment, for his saddlebags were hung with tassels of orange and crimson and blue. He had, too, a necklace of large blue beads, and a silver and blue ornament was hung over his shaggy forelock for luck.

Ismail led the flock; and Rahmeh, mounted on Jeida, rounded up the straying sheep from behind. Wherever she saw a clump of thorns thick with Dead Sea apples, she slid from Jeida's back and gingerly plucked them from the prickly mass. They looked like great beads of amber. But they were filled with pith, and, strung on a long strand of wool, would make a magnificent necklace for Nib on his return. There was not a tree in sight — only the pale sagebrush and the tangle of thorns and a great waste of sandy hills dipping down to the Dead Sea, which lay in its bowl of blue hills, a quiet, sunshiny lake with hardly a ripple. Along the roadside, patches of salt cropped to the surface and lay on the brown earth as white as hoar frost.

Ismail led the flock back into the hills away from the



Dead Sea. He separated the little lambs from the rest of the flock and left them behind with Rahmeh in a hidden ravine, which ran like a streak of life across the immense gray wilderness. Rahmeh sat tossing and counting her lapful of Dead Sea apples, wondering whether father and Yussef had yet reached Jerusalem, that great walled city nearly four thousand feet above her, which to her imagination seemed to touch the sky. Was the ground up there covered with that white mysterious thing called snow, which never came to them in the Jordan Valley?

Suddenly over the edge of the ravine the wind swept a flock of small quail, all whirring and chirping, and dropped them into the warm hollow. There they lay, fluttering and bewildered, but so tame that Rahmeh could easily have caught them. She looked up at the sky. The wind must be blowing up there, she thought, and then she heard Ismail calling. He was coming over the top of the hill carrying three little long-legged black lambs, and behind him trooped the rest of the flock, black, white, and brown, tinkling and bleating and nibbling at the shrubs as they passed.

‘Rahmeh,’ said Ismail, ‘there’s a storm coming. You had better start ahead on Jeida and take these three little fellows who are too weak to walk. I can bring in

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the rest.' Ismail dropped two of the lambs into the bags attached to Jeida's saddle and gave the third one to Rahmeh to carry across her lap. 'Take the Dead Sea road,' he called after her.

Jeida chose a sheep track to the top of the ravine and from there a stony way, like the bed of a torrent, which ran down into the valley. He dropped nimbly from boulder to boulder until they came down to the sand-dunes which lie about the end of the Dead Sea, now dark as slate between its rocky shores.

The sky was heavy with gray clouds. As they came over a hill that was like a great bare dune, Rahmeh felt Jeida suddenly quiver under her; then snorting with terror he plunged down the hill, and, not stopping to pick his way, made straight for the valley road. Casting a swift glance backward, Rahmeh saw what seemed to be a large fierce dog just over the brow of the next sand-dune. He was following them in a crooked, skulking way, his head down, but his evil yellow eyes turned upward. He was striped with bands of yellow across his shoulders. A mane of coarse, bristling hair stood upright.

Rahmeh's heart gave a great thump of fright, for she realized that this was a hyena and that he was after the lambs; after Jeida, too, perhaps; for though hyenas are

great cowards, they do sometimes attack donkeys and other animals that cannot fight. Jeida, sweating and trembling and galloping wildly toward the valley road, was not more frightened than Rahmeh. All the dark stories she had ever heard about hyenas came back to her — that they stole lambs from the fold and babies from the cradle; that they even stole your *mind*, until you were forced to follow wherever they went. Rahmeh tightened her hold on the lamb in her lap until its little round head pressed tightly against her chest, and leaning over caught Jeida's neckband with both hands. It is probable that if she had not been an Arab child she would not have held on at all. Of course if she had dropped the lamb on the road the hyena would have stopped following, in order to devour it; but Rahmeh was too good a shepherdess even to think of such a thing. Her one idea was to protect and save the lamb.

Until now Jeida had kept ahead, but he was winded and trembling, and suddenly stumbling, he came down on his knees, almost throwing Rahmeh over his head.

At the same time the hyena, leaving the shelter of the sand-dunes, circled about to head them off. He was very near now, humping his shoulders in an ugly fashion, and showing his fangs. The lambs bleated with terror.

Then, as Rahmeh shut her eyes in a spasm of fright,

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and Jeida, regaining his feet, jerked backward on quivering flanks, there came the sharp crack of a rifle, and with a yelp the hyena rolled over in a cloud of dust.

A man in khaki came running over the dunes, rifle in hand. He was an English soldier who, on his way to camp, had seen the peril of the little shepherdess.

‘All right,’ he cried, ‘don’t be afraid!’ But Rahmeh and Jeida were already fleeing toward the gray house where there were sheltering walls, a well of cold water, and mother.

The next day Rahmeh stayed at home and strung the Dead Sea apples into a magnificent necklace, not for big Nib, but for brave little Jeida.



## THE PIGEON MOSQUE

‘If I could write like that,’ thought Omar enviously, ‘I’d send a letter to my brother in America, telling him how I went out on the Bosphorus in a boat and caught seven fish.’

He was watching the spectacled old Turk, who sat all day in the court of the Pigeon Mosque, writing for those who did not know how. Omar had been to school, where, sitting on straw mats with the other boys, weaving his body to and fro as they recited in unison, he had learned parts of the Koran by heart; but he had never learned to write. If the fat merchant who was dictating to the scribe could not write his own letters, why should Omar? And if every one knew this art, how would the old man earn his living?

Fatima, Omar’s sister, did not worry about such things. None of the girls whom she knew ever went to school. She sat feeding the pigeons, glad of every day before her mother should make her hang a thick black veil across her face when she went for water. But the big brother who had gone to Chicago wrote home that there all the children could read and write, even the

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little ones. He was shocked at Omar's ignorance. That was why Omar hung about the old Turk every day, watching him make the quick little marks that meant words.

When the merchant in the red fez had paid his money and gone, Omar ventured timidly. 'I think I could make those letters,' he said, 'but I don't know what they mean.'

'Boy,' answered the Turk, 'you must not come here to pick up crumbs like the pigeons. If you wish to learn, I will teach you; but you must work.'

After that, every day for months Omar might have been seen sitting on the step at the feet of the scribe, laboriously penning quirls and dots and dashes, and learning to form them into words. Gradually he came to know the meaning of the texts written in white and gold on the green and blue tiles of the mosque, and to love the place as he never had before.

It was a pleasant school, under the sky. In the center was a beautiful covered fountain with a tiled roof resting on white columns. The doors of the mosque were of dull green bronze, and its walls were a blend of ivory and apricot-tinted marbles, with rich tiles let into them. Beyond the gateway of the court a white minaret shot toward the turquoise sky, and an old plane tree covered



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# The Pigeon Mosque

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with button balls harbored hundreds of pigeons which drifted down to the court in search of food.

The mosque had a quaint story, too. The Sultan Bajesid, who built it to be buried in, was a stingy man, and although he wished the mosque to be very beautiful, the money gave out long before it was finished; so the people of Constantinople were asked to contribute. One poor widow, who had nothing to give but a pair of pigeons, brought them as her offering. The Sultan was pleased, and ordered that the birds be left in the court as an example of generosity. That was four hundred years ago, and now the gray pigeons, descendants of the original pair, hover in clouds about the mosque and give it its name. But though the old Sultan was a miser, he was no coward. In token of that, when he was at last buried in his mosque, his people placed under his arm a brick made of the dust shaken from his garments — a sign that he had been no slacker, but had fought in the dust of battle.

‘That was Bajesid’s idea of playing the game,’ said the scribe. ‘Now, your battle is to learn to read and write, and you must not be a slacker either if you use Bajesid’s mosque as a schoolhouse.’

When Omar was not learning these things from the old Turk, he was studying the signs on the shops and

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the numbers on the street cars. He had no paper or books, but he copied letters and figures on bits of brick and plaster, and worked hard.

One day he saw a man, poorly dressed and carrying a package, looking anxiously at the signs over the bazaars. Now and then he stopped people to show them a written paper, but they shook their heads and hurried on, for they could not read. Omar approached the man shyly.

‘Let me see if I can read it,’ he said. As he looked at the characters they seemed alive, for he had studied the same words and numbers on a signboard in another part of the city.

‘Yes, I know what it means and will take you to the place,’ said Omar.

The man was so grateful that when he delivered the package to the merchant to whom it belonged, he said, ‘Had it not been for this boy, who can read, I should not have found you.’

‘Ah, you can read, can you?’ said the merchant thoughtfully. ‘That is good. If you wish a job with me I can give you one.’

Omar replied that he did not yet know enough to stop studying. ‘But,’ he added, ‘if you will employ me half a day I will study the other half.’

# The Pigeon Mosque

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‘Very well,’ said the merchant, ‘the more you know, the greater value you will have for me.’

So at last Omar could write proudly to his brother in Chicago, ‘See! I have begun, and now I do not intend to let those American boys get ahead of me!’

## THE ROAD TO ARCADIA

FIVE boys sat matching pennies on the floor of a temple — the ruined temple of Hera in the ancient Greek city of Olympia. They were little boys, all in short trousers, and Theo and Alexander in the long-sleeved blue aprons worn by boys in the primary grades of school. Spiro and Andreas, a little older, wore brown woolen capes and little caps with tassels. Adoni, the oldest, had finished the primary school and wore a *fustanella*, that is, a full white kilt, which stood out like a ballet dancer's skirt. On his shoes were black pompons like his father's.

The ruined temple was a favorite place to play, for the boys were very proud of the fact that it was one of the famous spots of the earth. Among the blackberry vines and the daisies, great blocks of marble lay about, like fallen checker towers on a carpet. The boys knew the stories about the wilderness of buildings, which were now marked only by foundation lines or rows of broken columns. Here the great Olympic Games had been begun more than two thousand years ago — the games that have been revived in our time, and in which it is such an honor to take part. To these boys the





FIVE BOYS SAT MATCHING PENNIES ON THE FLOOR OF  
A TEMPLE



olden games seemed very real and the ancient place very living.

Tired of matching pennies, they took off their shoes and sprang to a paved spot near by, where they began to wrestle. In the gymnasium that had once stood here, the Olympic athletes had begun their training. The pavement of tile was grooved, to keep the wrestlers from slipping, and as the five boys tussled, their bare feet gripped the friendly tiles.

When they stopped their play, out of breath, Theo caught sight of the figure of a stranger, and all of them turned to look, abashed. From where they stood they could not tell whether it was that of a man or a woman, for the person sat low in the grass. A gray coat collar was turned up to the ears and a black cap pulled down, against a keen breeze that set the delicate iris aquiver and rippled the daisies on their stems.

The boys stood for a moment full of curiosity, then began to jump forward from stone to stone, pretending to look for blackberries, but really closing in on the stranger. When they came near they saw that it was a woman, and that a paint box lay open at her side. She looked up and smiled, and a sigh of relief went up from the boys. She was not going to drive them away. Instead, she held out her hand and said 'Good day' in

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their own tongue. This greeting appeared to be all the Greek that she knew, so the boys could only smile back at her and shake hands.

They would have liked to talk to her and tell her the stories about the ruins. They pointed to a fallen archway to show her the entrance to the famous stadium where races had taken place—a stretch of level ground now covered with wheat fields and olive trees, beneath which lay the great race course where the chariots had whirled and the spot where the victors had received their olive branches.

In the old days there had been no money prizes and no decorations. No professional runners or boxers or wrestlers were allowed to take part in the Olympic Games. It was a fair contest, for all the players had the same training, ten months in the gymnasium where the boys had just been wrestling. July was the month for the Games; and no matter what quarrels or wars there might be between the states of Greece, during that month they were forgotten. Peace was sworn, and all Greeks came together as brothers. It was not only the Greeks who gathered; people from other countries were welcomed, too, for in Olympia the word 'stranger' was sacred. To harm or cheat a guest was the meanest of crimes.



The five boys stood around the artist, and their courteous bearing seemed to show that they kept to the great tradition of the Games. Adoni jerked his head back scornfully and pointed to a row of large stones near by. On those blocks had once stood statues called *zanes*, paid for by the fines of contestants who had not 'played the game.' The largest one perpetuated the shame of a boy who had run away the night before the race in which he was to take part, because he had been afraid of failing. That was more than fifteen hundred years ago! The artist nodded and said 'Zanes!' and the boys knew that she understood.

They drew closer to watch her as she sketched. Along the road to Arcadia, on the embankment above them, a broken line of people, on foot and on donkey-back, were passing on their way home from market. It made a bright moving picture in the sunlight, but it was not easy to paint. Before one donkey was finished, another had trotted into his place in the picture. The boys laughed when the waggly ears of one donkey were placed on another one that had passed out of sight. Orange and black saddlebags took the place of a wooden saddle that had been hung with bunches of onions and carrots; and one woman was painted with another woman's baby.

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Quite as fascinating were the materials with which the artist worked — sticks of charcoal, a soft eraser, which could be squeezed like putty between the fingers, and a box full of tiny porcelain dishes filled with bright colors, besides tubes from which soft paint could be pressed on a tin plate and mixed with water. The box lay on the grass close by the artist's knee, and the boys longed to look it over, but were too shy and too well-bred to touch the things.

Andreas, looking up from watching this diverting business, spied two older boys coming toward their group. Uneasily the younger boys recognized Petro Negroponte, who was always bullying them on the school playground and elsewhere. The big boys lounged onto the scene and stood staring, their hands in their pockets. To show that they were not impressed by what was going on, they began to make scornful remarks, at which the little boys grinned nervously, hoping that after all they might be allowed to stay.

But Petro had no intention of letting them enjoy themselves. 'Here, get out of this, you!' he said roughly. As the five stood irresolute, he raised his arm threateningly.

'Go!' he commanded.

Reluctantly the little boys turned away and began

to play leap-frog in an open space where once had stood an altar to the great god Zeus. Looking back wistfully, they saw something that made them stop their game in horror.

The big boys, too, had moved away. One of them was halfway up the embankment, but Petro Negroponte had slipped behind the tree under which the artist sat. Suddenly his hand shot out, and the next instant he and his pal were dashing up the embankment and along the road to Arcadia.

‘My paint box!’ cried the artist, springing to her feet. She spoke in English, but the little boys understood. Their own particular stranger had appealed to them for help! Forgetting their fear, they started in full cry after the thieves.

Along the stony road to Arcadia they ran, the artist panting far behind. Shepherds waved to show which direction the fugitives had taken. Men in the field shouted encouragement, but no one joined the chase.

What the boys feared, happened. Petro and his companion made for a thick wood on a cliff above the road. There, rocks and brush made pursuit almost impossible. With thumping hearts and dry throats, the little boys scrambled up the steep incline and out of sight of the artist on the road below.

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It was a long half-hour before they came sliding down the hill, dusty and sweating. Andreas carried the paint box, but it was empty. All of the boys were silent and ashamed, because they had failed, but, most of all, because a Greek boy had betrayed a stranger. There were still *zanes* in Olympia!

The sun was dropping low. It touched the sheep in the meadows, rimming each one of them with silver. The road to Arcadia still lay in sunshine, and over it the little procession turned back.

Suddenly Spiro pounced on something lying in a rut — a stick of charcoal! Instantly five pairs of eyes sharpened, searching the edges of the road. Patiently they went over the course step by step, and shouts of triumph punctured the twilight when a lead pencil or a tube of paint was found among the rocks. At the top of the embankment, where Petro had stumbled over a pine root, they found the most. The box had slipped and, having no cover, many of the paints had dropped from it.

Eagerly the boys gathered the lost tubes. Not the very smallest piece of charcoal was withheld, not even the fascinating lump of rubber which trembled in Alexander's grimy little hand, nor the empty porcelain pans which Adoni picked out of the moss. At the end

## The Road to Arcadia

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of the search, a handful of odds and ends had been gathered, precious little bits of red and yellow and green saved from the wreck.

Then, since words meant little between them and their stranger, boys and artist smiled at each other in the dusk, in perfect understanding as they all shook hands again.

The honor of Olympia was clear when the wind and the sun went down at the end of the valley.



## THE CHRISTMAS LANTERNS

NIKOLA usually began his day by fetching two jars of fresh water for his mother. He filled them at the public fountain, loaded them on his donkey, and then he and the donkey trotted home along the sea wall.

Nikola lived in a village of stone, which led up the side of a cliff to a plateau of rocks and thistles. Ages ago the sea had raged through here and had worn big caves in the cliff. In some of these caves people lived, having made them into houses by building walls in front of them, with windows and a door, and sufficient roof to hold a chimney, which was really nothing more than a big water jug the bottom of which had been broken out. Up the stone stairs, which served as a street, women toiled daily with similar jars on their shoulders. If they were tired, all they had to do was to sit down and rest on the flat roof of a house.

Over these steps Nikola skipped one hot winter's morning to lead out his little flock of sheep, penned in a cave higher up. What a place of stones and thistle it was! But farther back from the sea there was more grass, and thither Nikola guided his flock. From below they were plainly visible against the dark sky.



HE AND THE DONKEY TROTTED HOME ALONG THE SEA WALL



## The Christmas Lanterns

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A boy coming along the road saw them and smiled craftily. 'I'll get ahead of that fellow,' he said to himself. It was Philippu, coming from the town with a roll of colored tissue paper in his hand. Nikola on the hill-top, unmindful of Philippu's presence, stretched himself vigorously, flinging out his arms against the sky. One arm pointed toward Mount Ida, where the Greek god Zeus was born, the other toward Mount Jukta where he died. But that meant nothing to Nikola. He was so used to the glorious mountains that he paid no attention to them. He sat down and considered what could be done about the holidays. The Greeks have a different calendar from ours, so that Christmas and New Year's come thirteen days later with them than with us. Consequently it was a day in early January when Nikola was thus making plans for Christmas.

It is the custom in Greece for boys to go about from house to house, singing carols on Christmas and New Year's Eve just as the waits do in England. They carry lanterns, usually fancy ones, which they make themselves in order to show that they have taken pains to attract and please and are not begging. Rather, they are carrying a little portable show, and they sing so lustily that people are either pleased to hear them or glad to pay them a few pennies to move on.

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Nikola had learned to his disgust that Philippu, besides making a bagpipe from a sheep's bladder, was planning a large lantern in the shape of a boat. This was just what Nikola himself had thought to do, and for which he had already made a rough drawing from a ship going to Alexandria, which had lain off the harbor for a day. But now there was nothing left for him but to make a lantern in the form of a house. Or should it be a church, with two towers and a dome?

In his heart Nikola felt that he would make a failure of the dome. So after all it must be a house. But he would make a very large one indeed, and put five or six candle ends in it. A green house with red windows and a big yellow door! Over the door he would put a flag-pole and hang out the Greek flag, a white cross on a blue ground. Superb! He rolled on his back for joy, his feet high in the air. His thick brown *burnous* kept the thistles from pricking his back.

And then what should he buy with all the money he would earn? As he thought it over he seemed to have few needs. Goat's milk in the morning, plenty of olives with his bread at noon, and at night a dish of hot greens with oil and the juice of a lemon poured over them. What more could one wish?

On the whole a cake for his mother, such as was cus-



## The Christmas Lanterns 25

tomary at this time, brown and drenched with honey and studded with nuts and candied fruits, would be the best. He fondly hoped that it might be big enough for the whole family.

Nikola had a few coppers, which he had earned by carrying luggage down to the dock, and with these he proposed to buy tissue paper to cover the framework of his house. The next day, with a bundle of sticks, some glue and strings, he repaired to a windless cave and there began the fabrication of the wonderful lantern, while the sheep browsed among the rocks outside. The size and magnificence of his project Nikola kept secret, hoping to stun Philippu with it on the final night. But as he worked, he thought with envious concern that Philippu had not only his bagpipe with which to win fame and wealth, but the boat, too.

However, one cannot pipe and chant at the same time, and Philippu must find some one else to do his singing for him. Nikola had a good voice. He sang in the choir and knew the fine old carols. This was a great advantage over the boys who had only jazz to fall back on.

Philippu and Nikola were in reality good friends. It was only the competition in the matter of lanterns that had brought a sharp rivalry between them. They

## 26 Friends in Strange Garments

lived just outside the town of Candia on the Island of Crete. The town was surrounded by great walls, built by the Venetians when they were masters of the island centuries ago. Inside the walls were modern shops and hotels and market-places. A big restaurant, a few small ones and many coffee-houses were the hope of the boys.

Secretly each of them reconnoitered the field before the great night, and each decided that about half-past seven would be the most favorable time to sing before the big restaurant. It would be a mistake to go too early, for then the place would not be full; but if it was too late people would have parted with all their small change.

Accordingly, soon after dark on Christmas Eve, Nikola set forth with his wonderful house. His mother had given him four good candle ends, and he had two more in his pocket when these should have given out. He lighted his lantern before leaving home, in order that his parents and Daphne might see it, and then proceeded triumphantly down the road, carrying the brilliant fabrication in both arms, with an admiring retinue of small boys following.

When they reached the top of the town wall their pride met a check. Philippu had gone ahead in the

## The Christmas Lanterns

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dark, his lantern unlit; but here, before entering the town, he had stopped to light the candles; and now he stood with the wonderful ship in his arms, his bagpipe hung round his neck by a string. He was waiting for his singer, who was late.

The ship was a marvel. The boys gaped at it in amazement. It had four smokestacks and an imposing double row of portholes. On either side of the bows blazed the name 'Hellas' in letters of fire, and the rigging was thickly festooned with tiny pennants of many nations. Nikola's house was bigger and brighter, but the ship was an artistic triumph.

'Hello!' said Philippu coolly; 'made a house, did you?' There was something patronizing in his tone that irritated Nikola. Besides, the fickle crowd was pressing around Philippu's boat in unfeigned admiration, and Nikola decided to move on before they all left him.

'That's a fine ship,' he said carelessly. 'Well, come on, boys; we'll hurry up to the restaurant.'

'Second turn for you,' cried Philippu hotly. 'I got here first!'

'But you're not ready, and I am,' retorted Nikola. 'Come on, boys.'

In dismay Philippu saw his rivals rushing past him, and though still without a singer he joined in the race

## 28 Friends in Strange Garments

for the best position. But he moved too swiftly. A wind-blown tongue of flame licked at the ship's rigging and instantly the Christmas lantern shot up in a blaze. Despairingly Philippu flung it from him. The masterpiece fell to the ground, where it blazed and curled and blackened and went up in smoke. With a cry of rage Philippu sprang at Nikola; but Nikola had foreseen this and had set his house on the wall. He met Philippu halfway and caught him by the wrists. Both were muscular boys, and for a moment they rocked back and forth, grinding their teeth, while the small boys cheered for joy.

'Stop! Stop!' shouted Nikola above the noise, still holding Philippu by the wrists. 'I didn't hit you and I'm sorry your boat is burned. But you've still got your bagpipe. You play and I'll sing. We'll go halves.'

Philippu knew that the proposition was a generous one, considering that Nikola now had the field to himself and could make a good thing of it. There would be other bands of singers, of course, but they would probably carry Chinese lanterns and it was not likely that any one could outdo Nikola's house and his fine voice. He dropped his arms and stood back panting.

'All right,' he said at last, 'and next week I'll make another stunner.' He bent over the wreck of the

## The Christmas Lanterns 29

'Hellas' and extricated the candle ends from the smouldering rubbish. They would serve another day. So Philippu really gathered himself together finely after his disaster, though he could not restrain a groan as he turned away from the ruin of his masterpiece.

Outside the restaurant the boys looked the field over carefully, before beginning their campaign. Through the lighted windows they could see that the large room was nearly full of people eating. Philippu tested his bagpipe and Nikola looked well to his candles, that none of them should topple over. Then they engaged a small boy who had a pair of copper cymbals to clap for them, promising him five cents from their earnings. Thus they had the rudiments of a brass band. Nikola set the illuminated house on the sill of the restaurant window where it made a magnificent showing in the dark street. Then he opened the door a hand's breadth and the concert began. Strong and clear the young voice rang out in the night. Philippu piped and the small partner clashed his cymbals with terrific energy. People stopped eating to listen, and every one craned to get a look at the glowing house in the window. At last Nikola with a flushed face and beating heart advanced into the restaurant with a little saucer, which he had slipped into his pocket from his mother's cupboard. He had not



## 30 Friends in Strange Garments

thought that he should mind so much. But as he went from table to table and people dropped pennies smilingly into his plate, he forgot his shyness and thanked everybody joyfully, not trying to conceal his delight and surprise.

Outside, the boys counted their gains by the light of the Christmas lantern. Over three *drachmas* had come to them from their first attack. Up the street they went to further triumphs, followed by an ever-increasing train of admirers.

At last, all their candles burned, they sat down on the edge of the old fountain in the square, and again took stock. Nine *drachmas* and sixty *lepta*, after the cymbalist had been paid! Visions of cake now became possibilities. Rushing to the still open cake shop, they sang and piped lustily to the baker, and then throwing their coins on the counter ordered the best cake they could get for their money.

That is how it happened that on Christmas Day the members both of Nikola's and of Philippu's families ate their fill of sticky brown cake, thick with plums and almonds, with figs and dates and currants, all trickling with honey.

## DRAGA'S ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

ONE evening Draga and her brother Dushan squatted on the kitchen floor, eating their supper of stewed peppers smothered in clabbered milk, while their mother prepared the thick, sweet Turkish coffee over a stone brazier. Above them spread the hearth-hood, dark and velvety as a bat's wing. Wisps of blue smoke from their father's pipe floated toward it.

Of late many exciting things had happened. Father had come back from America with new clothes, a new language, and new ideas. Now the family sat silent in the grip of a great decision.

Dushan and Draga were to go to the American school in Monastir to learn English and other things not taught in their village. Father had been to town to make arrangements, and, since Dushan and Draga could show good reports from their home school, they were to be admitted on trial, Dushan to live with friends and attend as a day pupil, Draga to live in the dormitory as a boarder. Mother acquiesced bewildered, but her dark eyes lingered on Draga, who was her baby. She listened with considerable distrust to the tales of American women who went where and when they liked — tales

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even of girls who went to and from school alone on street cars, carrying their books under their arms!

The preparations were finished. They were to start the next morning. It would be a three days' journey in the ox-cart, and provisions stood ready in the shape of baskets of grapes and cheese, and a great loaf of brown bread, almost as big as a cart-wheel, wrapped in clean linen. The heavy white tunics with their flowered borders were folded between home-woven blankets.

After coffee, taking two baskets, Draga went to the stream which bounded down toward Lake Prespa, to gather succulent leaves and grass for the goats. The village houses were deep ochre in color, some with jutting windows faced with turquoise blue. Above the walls which shut the gardens from the street rose cypresses and matted vines and the wide tops of fig trees. Scarped blue mountains climbed behind the village, and below it lay Lake Prespa, holding in its bright waters a tiny island on which could be seen the ruins of a tower where long ago the Bulgarian Tsars had hidden their treasure from the Greek Emperors of Constantinople. That was before the time of the Serbian Tsars who conquered Macedonia, or the Turks who took it from the Serbs.

In this country Alexander the Great had lived as a

## Draga's Entrance Examinations 33

boy, and since then it had known so many masters and was still claimed by so many nations that people continued to live in fortress-like houses whose doors were barred at night with heavy stanchions.

Draga's home was one of these houses. All its doors and windows opened on the inner court. On the ground floor were stalled the oxen, the hens, and the goats. Above the stables projected a wide veranda hung with gay Serbian rugs and strings of tobacco and beans. Below, in the open space of the court, was piled husked corn, which glowed like a heap of gold when the sun struck it.

Draga's thoughts rushed back to the familiar scene the next day, as the ox-cart creaked through the sere and dusty country, over a road that had once been a great Roman thoroughfare. It was really a continuation of the famous Appian Way from Rome to Brindisi. There it disappeared in the Adriatic, to emerge on the other side at Durazzo, in Albania, where it took another name, of Via Egnatia, and continued across country to Salonica. Monastir, where Draga and Dushan were to go to school, was the halfway station. The old Roman road was still the great highway, but the merchant caravans and the trampling legions had disappeared. Military trucks, white with dust, sometimes lumbered

## 34 Friends in Strange Garments

by, carrying stores to some outlying garrison, and the mail car was sure to be met sooner or later jacking up its wheels for new tires. For the most part, people went by on foot or on donkey-back, all burden-laden.

There were brigands back in the hills. Sometimes they disguised themselves as Turkish women, with long, black veils over their faces, and flowing garments, which concealed weapons; but persons traveling in an ox-cart driven by a barefooted boy had nothing to fear. Nevertheless, they spent the nights near some small village that looked like an outcrop of stones on the hillside, and after coffee and sour milk at the inn, stretched themselves out on the floor of the wagon and pulled the blankets over them.

On the third day they came to Monastir — to Draga and Dushan a bewildering, beautiful place. The next day was market day, and their mother could go back in company with friends. So, on the threshold of the school, with many hurried embraces, she left Draga, who felt small and alone in spite of the crowd of new faces around her.

A month went by and the first examinations were over.

Draga's parents were to come that day to learn whether or not she had passed. Draga did not know and was afraid to ask. One moment she trembled with hope



## Draga's Entrance Examinations 35

that she had not passed, so that she might travel back in the ox-cart with her parents to the golden-lighted court, the shadowy kitchen, and the sweet, musty smell of grapes. Then she shriveled with shame at the thought of failure. Besides, she was beginning to love the school life; the fresh clean dormitory, where they slept with open windows; the team work of study and play; and the evening hour, when they all sat on the floor and told stories before going to bed. Also, she had learned with surprise that Bulgarian girls are as kindly as Serbians. There were several in the school, and one of them, Boiana, had been her friend from the start. This seemed strange, for she had always heard that Bulgars were evil and hostile people.

Fearing that her mother might find her strange because of her bobbed hair and straight gingham dress, Draga put on her Macedonian garments. The embroidery on her tunic was of an ancient pattern called 'Marko, the King's Son,' so named in honor of the Serbian prince, Marko, the national hero of chivalry and romance, who had lost a crown rather than tell a lie. His home had been in Macedonia over five hundred years before Draga's time, but 'Marko's pattern' had been handed down from one generation of Serbian women to another, each proud to wear it, as Draga was

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to-day. The sleeveless jacket which she wore over her tunic was of a clear red, like the peppers strung against the white walls of her home; and wound around her waist was a rope of black wool to keep her brilliant girdle in place.

Behind the school playground there was a high brick wall with a small green door. It led into a quiet, neglected garden like a scene from a book. There was a well in the center; gourds and spiked flowers, purple and white, grew in the rank grass, and crooked plum trees traced blue shadows on the walls which shut the garden away from the clatter of the streets. This was the paradise of a large family of rabbits, and when Draga felt homesick she slipped away to feed them with scraps of red peppers, which she begged from the cook; for all Macedonians down to the rabbits love peppers.

Draga had begun to feel the charm of order and cleanliness, but she missed the animals which were a part of the family at home, and which she had fed and cared for all her life. She was torn between a longing to go back to her home and a real love for the life in school. Her examination marks would decide which it was to be. Of her Serbian studies she felt fairly sure. It was the strange English language that staggered her — its incomprehensible verbs, its spelling without a clue. Some



STRINGING PEPPERS



## Draga's Entrance Examinations 37

of the Serbian girls spoke it well, and from them she learned more than from her books. The queer names for food and clothes and the objects in the schoolroom she was beginning to master.

While the rabbits were nibbling their peppers someone came running to the green door. 'Draga, your father and mother are here!'

Her mother bent over her, enveloped her in the soft white folds of her head dress, and smothered her with kisses. 'Oh, what a clever girl to pass in everything, even the strange English!' she whispered, and her father's eyes shone proudly upon her.

Suddenly Draga knew how glad she was to stay, how proud that she could hold her place among the other girls; and she realized that her parents too, as much as they missed her, would rather leave her than take her back. Together they were all working for the future.



## THE TRUCE

WHEN Rastem was born his father hung a gun and a cartridge belt on the wall for him. There they were to stay until Rastem was fourteen years old, when he would take them down himself and wear the belt and carry the gun for the first time. Meanwhile, he began his life in a little painted cradle, into which his mother strapped him so tightly that he could move neither legs, arms nor head, but lay like a little mummy, completely covered with a rough homespun blanket.

Rastem lived in Albania, the land of the mountain eagle. His home was in a strange old town perched so high on a mountain-top that the clouds hung over it like a dark flat roof so that the cocks crowed all day, as they do when calling the hens to shelter from a storm.

Rastem's father was a well-to-do man, and the family lived in a pleasant house the plastered walls of which were painted with birds and foliage. There were many slatted windows and a cheery tiled roof with broad eaves.

Next door to Rastem lived Marko, a boy of about his own age. Though their families never visited each other, and though the gate between the two yards was

kept locked, the two little boys had discovered one another as soon as they began to walk; and gazing through the openings in the fence of woven branches that separated them, they had quickly come to an understanding. Later on, they worried a passage under the hedge through which they crawled freely to pass long hours of play together. They did not understand why at first Marko was scowled at when he went to Rastem's house and Rastem was scowled at when he went to Marko's house; but as neither of the boys was contented long without the other, their elders soon let them go and come as they liked.

When they grew older and mingled with other children they found out what the trouble was. Between the two families there was what in Albania is called a blood feud; that is, some one in Marko's family had shot some one in Rastem's family during a quarrel, and had killed him. It had happened a long time before. The man who had shot the other had fled to a foreign country and his children had grown up there; but until some one in Rastem's family shot a man in Marko's family the feud could not end, nor was the honor of Rastem's family clear.

That old quarrel of the grown people seemed a far-off, foolish thing to the boys, and no concern of theirs. They

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looked into each other's eyes and grinned in perfect comradeship when the larger boys urged them to fight it out together. There was too much fun to be had out of life to waste time in quarreling; and Kruja, that strange old town, was not a bad place to grow up in. Its one long, curving street, which skirted the mountain side like a tail, was crowded with open booths and was so narrow that the roofs met overhead. Here on market days were the clack and tap of little hoofs as the donkeys pushed through the crowd with broad loads of hides and wood or with saddle bags stuffed with lambs or a baby or two. And there the coppersmiths beat out trays and water pots before one's eyes. The shoemakers cut the delicately curved slippers from scarlet or orange or black leather, the hatters shaped a white or red fez over a block of wood, and artificers in silver polished pistol handles as thickly set with bright stones as a plum pudding is with raisins.

There was also the barber, a white bearded Turk in a heavy turban and a robe of gold-colored silk, sitting on green cushions amid basins and jars of polished copper. Then, too, there was the amusing Mohammedan who called to prayer from the white minaret. He came at certain hours into the tiny balcony that swung out under the spiked roof of the minaret, took hold of his

# The Truce

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ears in a comical manner and uttered a harsh and dismal shout, which was echoed by the wall of rock behind him.

Far above the point of the minaret towered a cliff, on the summit of which a battered castle with one square tower was blocked against the sky. There were strange tales about the castle, which Rastem learned when he began to grow up, and here the boys played at the game of defending the castle against the Turks, sending stones thundering into the depths of the ravine below as their ancestors had done in the days of Skanderbeg, when the Turks had conquered the country, to rule it cruelly for hundreds of years, until at last, through the great War, Albania regained her freedom.

The boys realized dimly that something glorious had happened; but they did not know how great a change had come over their country, for life in Kruja had not changed much since the war, except to grow harder. Every one was poor and wore old clothes, which was a hardship for the Albanians, who love their gorgeous costumes. Fortunately they have strong homespun, which lasts for years. Rastem wore trousers of rough white woolen material braided with black, a Skanderbeg jacket, and sandals of cowhide.

A few days before Rastem's fourteenth birthday his father found him looking longingly at the gun on the

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wall. 'I am sorry, Rastem,' he said gravely, 'that you and Marko are such friends. It can bring you nothing but sorrow.'

'Why sorrow?' asked Rastem, startled.

'Why? Because of the feud between us,' said his father. 'It rests with you to clear the family honor. You don't take it seriously now, but when you and Marko are men, either you will shoot him or he will shoot you.'

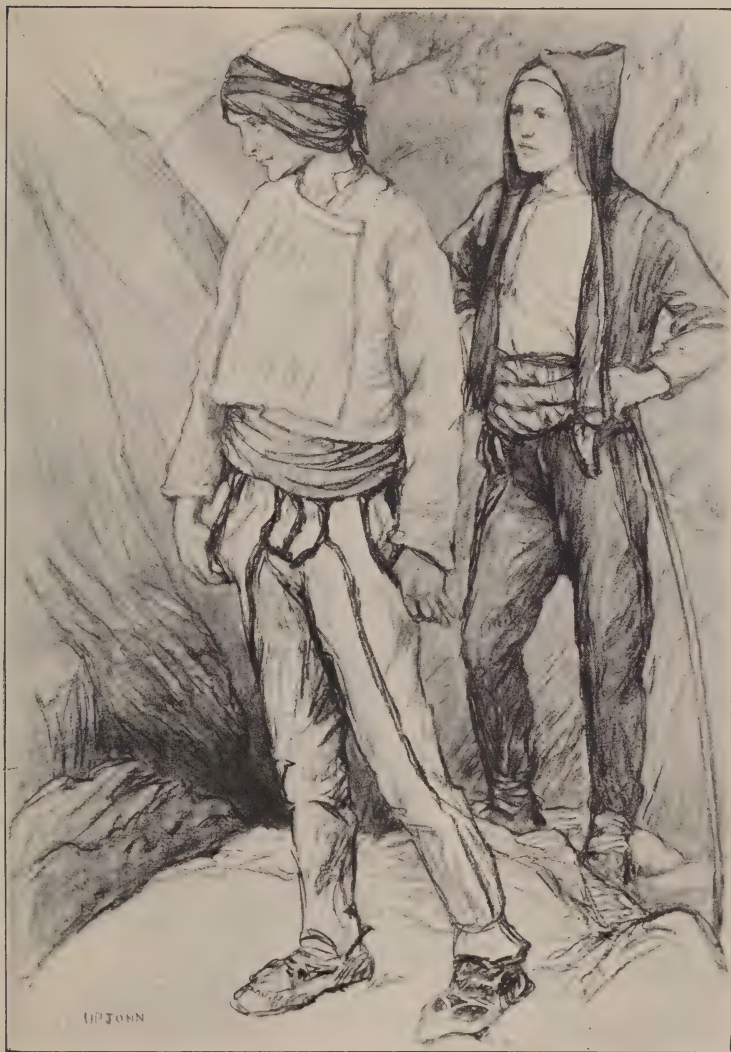
'Shoot Marko? Never!' exclaimed Rastem with flaming cheeks and eyes.

'It is the law of your country and your tribe. You cannot change it,' said his father; 'it is written in the Canon of Lek.' And he left the room.

Rastem was angry and excited. All the pleasure in his gun was gone.

In order to get away from the sight of it, he went into his mother's room. It was a homelike place. The wooden ceiling was painted green, with bunches of flowers. There was a warm-colored rug on the floor, and a divan covered with carpets ran the length of one side, under a row of latticed windows. In the little open cupboards in the walls Rastem's mother kept spices and perfumes and sweets. There were no chairs, but two sides of the room were skirted by a low platform of brickwork, over





RASTEM AND MARKO



which were spread mats and cushions. On the bricks stood a brazier of glowing coals. Rastem sat down cross-legged and spread his hands to the warmth. The room was fragrant and drowsy. Outside, the rain slapped against the window and a mass of cloud surging up from the valley blotted out the world.

The boy was very wretched. He had been taught to do many things that seem strange to us, but were quite right to him, such as taking off his shoes when he entered a house, keeping his hat on at the table, and eating his mutton and rice with his fingers. So when he was told by his father that he must shoot his best friend he had a sickening fear that after all he might be forced to do it if he could not find a way out.

‘Skanderbeg kept his sword for his enemies,’ he reasoned, ‘not for his friends.’ Now that Albania was at last free from the Turks, it would be a fine thing indeed for Albanians to begin to kill one another! It was unthinkable that he should shoot Marko. He *must* find a way out!

There were the two men from Tirana and Kruja, he pondered. They had had a feud, but they had sworn a *besa* or truce for six weeks, in order to carry out a cattle deal; and they had laughed together and visited like good friends. To be sure, when the six weeks were up,

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they had shot at each other and one of them had lost two fingers. Why had they not done business and enjoyed each other for a longer *besa*?

And then an idea came to Rastem! He struck his hands together and rushed out of the house. 'Marko!' he called, tearing at the gate. And Marko met him half-way, under the big olive tree.

'Look here, Marko,' said Rastem, 'why can't we end this feud, not by shooting each other, but by swearing a *besa* for the rest of our lives? The old quarrel isn't our affair, but the *besa will be*, and we've got to keep it. So long as we do, no one can hurt us.'

'So long as we keep the *besa*, no one can hurt us,' repeated Marko slowly. 'Why, of course! Why did we never think of that, Rastem?' he cried, excitedly.

Under the olive tree, the two boys clasped hands and swore eternal friendship while far above them two mountain eagles circled slowly on flat wings round the Skanderbeg tower, and through the breaking clouds the Adriatic gleamed like a streak of silver on the horizon.

## THE SKANDERBEG JACKET

FIVE hundred years ago a boy named George Kastrioti leaned over the wall of his father's castle and peered into the depths of the gorge below. He could see a little white goat far down, just above the line of mist that hid the bottom of the chasm. She was cropping the fresh leaves of a bush, which had taken root in a cracked rock. George watched her, fascinated. Would she try to come higher? Yes, she did. At least she raised her head. But when she saw the wall of sheer stone that rose above her, she flicked her tail and bounded downward instead. George laughed, and shouted back to his brothers, who were playing in the courtyard, that not even a goat could scale the walls! There was a merry romping troop of children in the castle. How safe they felt up there under the sky!

Their father was a Prince of the Albanian mountain tribes who call themselves 'Men of the Eagles.' His fortress stood on the Rock of Kruja, with the mountain dropping steeply from it. Only on one side a rugged path led up to the gateway. Over this went and came a stream of wiry mountain ponies and their riders, bring-



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ing provisions and arms and messages to the inmates of the castle.

Most of them wore short jackets of rough white wool with tight sleeves to the elbow, large white pompons in front of their shoulders, and square collars with fringe, which hung to their waists behind. When it rained heavily, as it often does on the Rock, they drew the heavy collars over their heads, crossing the fringe and holding it firmly between their teeth. This left both hands free for weapons, and weapons were needed in those days. Prince Kastriota was away fighting most of the time, and with him the Men of the Eagles, trying to press back the Turks who more and more were mastering the country.

But the people in the castle felt safe, though they knew there were enemies in the land. George and his brothers and sisters often played at defending the fortress, dropping stones over the wall and listening to hear them thud in the depths, or they amused themselves by looking down on the village people as they gathered around the great 'Kruja,' or fountain, with their water-pots, and stopped to talk about the army of Turks who were conquering the lowlands.

At one corner of the castle a great tower of white stone stood out against the background of gray rock.



AN ALBANIAN STORY-TELLER



## The Skanderbeg Jacket

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This was the watch-tower. From it the young Kastriotas could see clear across Albania, from the sharp mountains, over the hot plain and the steaming marshes to the sea, which seemed to lie forever in sunshine, no matter how dark it might be on the Rock.

Every road and trail was visible from the tower, for the mountains were bare, except where olive groves had been planted just below the castle. For miles around no enemy could approach unseen. Sometimes the watchers saw dark patches moving across the plain, and knew that they were troops of Turkish soldiers.

So things went for years. At last when George was nine years old, a terrible thing happened. The dark patches grew larger and came closer, until the people of the castle, looking anxiously over the wall, could see bands of Turkish cavalry driving the Men of the Eagles before them toward the mountains. On they came, until Prince Kastriota, riding hard with only a handful of men, reached the castle to tell his family that Albania was lost, and that he should have to make such terms as he could with the Turks; it was useless to try to hold the castle against them.

The Sultan agreed to let the Prince go on living in the castle at Kruja, but he would have to give up his four sons as hostages, and the Albanians would have to pay a yearly tribute.

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Kastriota took his boys aside and explained to them what it meant to be a hostage; that so long as he, their father, did not rebel against the Sultan, the boys were safe, but if there should be an uprising in Albania they would be put to death; also, that if they did not obey the Sultan and keep faith with him, the Men of the Eagles would be made to suffer. The boys bravely promised to play the game, but it must have been a sad day at Kruja when the Sultan rode away with his young captives.

The boys were treated honorably; they were given fine horses, and perhaps they enjoyed much of the journey, for they were used to hard travel in the saddle, and did not tire easily. Once beyond the barrier of their own mountains, they crossed the great tableland of Macedonia, more open than any country they had known, where firm roads made by the Romans centuries before led past cities and castles, and by beautiful churches and convents built by Bulgarians and Serbs, but now all under the hand of the Turk.

At last they entered Thrace and came to Adrianople, where the Sultan lived — if you wish to look for it on the map you will find it south of Bulgaria. The palace at Adrianople was very different from the castle at Kruja. It stood on the hot plain instead of among the



## The Skanderbeg Jacket

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cool mountains, and it was filled with a soft luxury that did not exist in the home on the Rock. It was beautiful with marbles and mosaics, with gardens and fountains. There were rugs and hangings, silks and perfumes such as George had never before known.

George was a kind, brave boy, quick to learn. He won the heart of the Sultan, who was kind to him and brought him up with his own children. He never forgot his parents on the dear Rock, but since he was only nine years old when he was taken as a hostage, he soon lost his homesickness and began to make friends about him. The Sultan gave him a new name, Skanderbeg, from *Skander*, which means Alexander, because the mother of Alexander the Great had been an Albanian, and *beg* or prince, because he was of high rank.

So Skanderbeg began his new life. He learned to ride and hunt and fight. When he was eighteen years old the Sultan put him in command of an army and sent him into Asia Minor, which, you will see, is not far from Adrianople.

Perhaps Skanderbeg would always have remained the Sultan's friend if his brothers had been treated kindly. But when his father, John Kastrioti, died, the Sultan poisoned all three of them and annexed Albania to his empire. After that, Skanderbeg went about with an

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angry heart under his armor, and when the Sultan had a new war on his hands and sent the young captain to fight the Hungarians, he looked for his chance to escape.

He had no quarrel with the Hungarians. All he wanted was to be free; free to go back to his own people, whom he now knew to be unhappy and oppressed. He wanted to escape from the soft life of Adrianople and to be back in Albania among the rocks and the Men of the Eagles in their white jackets, helping them to regain their freedom. In his army there were many Albanians who, like him, had been taken to Turkey as prisoners and made to fight for the Sultan. These men joined Skanderbeg, and together they escaped across Serbia and through the dangerous mountain passes into Albania.

The people came down from the mountains and flocked to Skanderbeg. The Turks were driven out of the country and for twenty-five years — as long as Skanderbeg lived — Albania was free.

So George Kastrioti came back to Kruja to be the helper and the hero of his people. When he died the grief of the tribesmen was so great that they dyed their white jackets black, and so they are worn to this day.

You will see the Skanderbeg jacket everywhere in Northern Albania — on the shepherds of the hills; on

## The Skanderbeg Jacket 51

the men of the many tribes who come riding to market on their wiry ponies, their deep collars drawn over their heads to protect them from rain or sun; and on the metal workers and the farmers of Kruja, who linger about the great fountain which still gushes out from the rock below the ruined castle.

## MIRKO AND MARKO

MIRKO and Marko were two gay little Montenegrin pigs. They had the freedom of the Ivanovitch kitchen, where they lived in peace and plenty, and as they were plump and handsome, every one admired them. Zorka alone did not think of them in terms of bacon and sausage. To her they were playfellows.

Zorka's father worked in the sawmill, her grandmother kept the house, and Zorka kept the pigs. The length of their life was one bright summer, spent for the most part with Zorka under spreading beech trees or along roadways thick with tufted clover.

One evening, as they came home through the shady village, an old blind man sat in the square singing as he strummed on a one-stringed fiddle. He was a wandering minstrel or *gouslar*, and he sang the deeds of heroes and the triumph of courage over loss and suffering.

The song was as wild and sad as the hills that are dark with firs, but the villagers crowded about the singer, for they loved the brave tales of their people, who had never lost their strip of bare mountain or their freedom. Zorka tiptoed closer and gazed at the old man.



ZORKA WITH HER PET PIGS





He had only one eye, but that was as keen as a hawk's. A flat skullcap slanted over his gray hair. He wore a long, dark green coat edged with silver braid, blue knee breeches and a crimson waistcoat, faded but heavy with rich embroidery.

Fascinated, Zorka hovered on the edge of the circle, listening to his shrill chant. The pigs trotted on contentedly toward home.

On the way their greed led them into a wild adventure. A plank bridged the swift mill-race, which skirted the road and led to the watermill on the opposite side.

The pigs had passed this plank every day of their lives, and had always longed to cross it, for they could smell the fresh meal from afar; but if they so much as pointed their greedy, pink noses in that direction someone appeared in the doorway brandishing a stick and Zorka jerked them anxiously back by their tails. Now Zorka was not with them and there was no one in the doorway. It stood open, and the sunlight fell on a silvery heap of meal on the floor under the mill stone. Its fragrance floated to them. Their stiff little hoofs tapped across the gangway and they plunged up to their ears in the soft, delicious mess. Then, as they wallowed blissfully, there came a sudden *whack, whack*, on their plump

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backs, and the angry voice of the miller's wife drowned their terrified squeals. In a cloud of flying meal they scurried back over the plank out of reach of the cudgel, making a bee line for the safety of their own kitchen.

But the miller's wife had other ways of reaching them than with a stick. She stopped Zorka's father as he was going home to supper. 'The next time,' she cried angrily, 'I'll cut their throats and hang their hams in the chimney!'

The threat troubled Zorka's father, who feared that he might have to pay for the spoiled meal. He went home with a deep frown between his brows. 'That settles it,' he said, 'those pigs must go to market to-morrow. They are as fat as young geese now, and should bring a good price, but another scrape like to-day's would wipe out all the profit.'

Zorka, crossing the threshold, heard the fatal words, and her heart stood still. The five minutes that she had spent in listening to the *gouslar* had perhaps cost the lives of her playmates. She took her place at the table speechless with dismay. There was a nice mutton stew, with beans and gravy, but Zorka could swallow hardly a mouthful. Her gaze was fixed on two sleek forms sleeping in the shadow of a bench by the door, their sides rising and falling peacefully.

Her father made plans quickly. He himself could not go to market, for his work at the sawmill kept him, and the grandmother was too old for the hard journey. Zorka's aunt was going, but she had two donkeys laden with firewood, and a third on which her baby in one saddlebag would balance a young kid and some turnips in the other. She could not be expected to look after two frisky pigs. Zorka must go with her and take Mirko and Marko safely to the market at Podgoritz.

This filled Zorka's heart with tumult. The journey was an event. She had made it only once in her life, and that once so long ago that she could hardly remember it. The market town lay almost at the other end of Montenegro. It would take two days on foot to reach it. They would have to go down, down from the wooded valley where the village of Kolashin lay, through bare, rocky gorges, crossing and recrossing a wild river many times, with the gray walls of the mountains towering high above them.

There would be many people going from the village, and others would join them on the road, coming from high places in the hills and deep places in the blue valleys. They would eat their meals along the way — meals of leeks and milk-white cheese, with black bread, and sometimes they would stop at a tavern or a friend's

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house to drink thick, sweet Turkish coffee from little brass cups.

There would be gossip and music and laughter all the way down to Podgoritzza, but Mirko and Marko would not return from the fair. Their blithe life spent in hunting for the best fodder along the brook would be over.

So the next morning big tears stood on Zorka's cheeks as she tied a yellow handkerchief over her head and bound her sandals. She let Mirko and Marko out of their comfortable pen, fed them an exquisite breakfast of boiled potatoes and milk, then washed and dried them before she joined her Aunt Basilika on the edge of the village. There a group of people were loading their donkeys under the beech trees. As most of the wood for building and burning in Montenegro comes from the Valley of Kolashin and the mountains behind it, many people were carrying firewood or charcoal for sale. Others had potatoes or walnuts, eggs and cheese or great sacks of wool. There were droves of sheep and goats, and a few cows. The cattle had to be driven slowly in order not to run all their fat off before they reached the market.

Mirko and Marko joined the procession in high spirits. The smell of garden stuff and grain was enticing



to them, and Zorka had to put them on a string to keep them from racing ahead under the feet of the donkeys. Long after the sun had risen for the rest of the world, the path that the market-goers followed lay in twilight, for eastward the mountains rose in a sheer wall that seemed to touch the sky.

In half an hour they had left the cool, green valley hung like a hammock between wooded mountains, and were winding their way through a stony land where there was no sprig of grass, but where the wild pomegranate bushes springing from crevices splashed their flame-like blossoms over the rocks. The mountain-sides were so steep that no soil clung to them, or if any did the first rushing rain washed it away. Here and there were what are called pot-holes, where long ago some whirling stream had kept a stone spinning round and round until it had ground a hollow in the rock. The stream had dried up or found a new course, but the hollow remained, like a stone bowl. Such soil as caught there was not washed away, as on the slope. People living near such pockets brought baskets and aprons full of earth and made precious little gardens of the hollows. Zorka could look down from the road and count the number of cabbages and potatoes growing in them.

Sometimes the travelers stopped at a spring to rest.

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Then Zorka would take Mirko and Marko by turns in her lap. The little pigs slept soundly, tired out by the rough trot over a rocky road instead of over the sod that they were used to.

When night came Aunt Basilika knocked at the door of a friend who lived near the road. A woman came out, throwing her arms wide in welcome. She kissed Zorka and Basilika on both cheeks and pulled the baby joyfully from the saddlebag.

There was room for the donkeys and the pigs in the sheepfold, which was a snug cave in the side of the hill. Shepherd boys brought straw and corn and water, and when the beasts were comfortable the family went into the house.

Zorka looked at it in amazement, for it was very different from her own home. That was built of wood with a shingled roof and a border of carving below the eaves. This valley house was of the rough stones of the hillside without mortar or plaster. The thatched roof was held in place by logs and stones. There were no windows and there was no chimney, but the smoke from the hearth, which was in the middle of the floor, found its way through the loose weave of the thatch.

The boys built a wood fire and their mother put over it a pot of soup. They were very poor people, but eager

to share everything they had with their friends. They gave them their mattresses, spreading Zorka's near the fire; they themselves slept on the ground.

The next night the market-goers camped on the edge of the town of Podgoritza. Zorka fell asleep to the stamping and grunting of animals and the jingling of bridles. At dawn every one was up, preparing coffee and putting on holiday clothes. Aunt Basilika took a long black skirt and white linen blouse from her saddlebags. Over them she wore a long sleeveless coat of robin's-egg blue with a border of pale gold balls. She tied a dark handkerchief over her head, and on it set a tiny skull-cap of black silk. Most of the women wore bright blue coats that had been a part of their wedding outfit. Their finery was shabby and faded, for no one had had new clothes since the war. As for the children who had outgrown their good garments, they were dressed for the most part in gunny sacks sewed together with ravelings.

Zorka was better off. She wore a gray homespun dress and had an orange-colored handkerchief over her head, and sandals of cowhide on her feet. The journey from Kolashin had been so gay that she had forgotten the purpose of it. Now it came over her with fright.

Mirko and Marko were restless and hungry. They

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rooted about, seeking the juicy clover of home in the sparse grass and weeds of the market place. Zorka watched them with an aching heart. If she saw a business-like man approaching, she stood in front of the little pigs to hide them or gathered them into her lap drawing her skirt over their heads, determined not to sell them. But as the day wore on and no one offered a price for them, she grew indignant. Were they not the most beautiful pigs in the market? How could any one pass them unnoticed?

As evening drew on she began to wonder what her father would say if she had to take Mirko and Marko back with her. She knew that he was counting on the money that they would bring. This was probably the last chance before spring to sell them. How could they be fed during the long winter?

Aunt Basilika had only a few fagots left. When those were sold she would pack her bags with the winter store that she had purchased, and she and Zorka would climb into the wooden saddles and begin the long homeward journey that very night. How would the short fat legs of Mirko and Marko make the uphill grade?

Twilight was already flooding the Plain of Podgoritzza when a man rode up looking for firewood. Seeing Basilika's fagots he went toward her, and then, peering

through the dusk, exclaimed, 'Why, it's Basilika Ivanova!'

He was an old friend of Zorka's father, a well-to-do merchant of Podgoritzza. 'And so this is Ivan's daughter,' he said, smiling at Zorka; 'but what fine pigs you have! Are they for sale?'

Zorka began to cry. 'They're not just pigs,' she said. 'They're Mirko and Marko, and I don't want them killed.'

'Oh, I don't kill such wee piggies,' said the merchant. 'They will grow to be grandfathers if you sell them to me; and I promise you they will live in a fine pen.'

Zorka dried her eyes, and under her breath named the price that her father had told her to ask. The merchant counted out silver and copper coins in her hand. She stowed them carefully away in the pocket of her petticoat, and then going down on her knees she hugged each little pig and kissed him on the top of his silly head before their new owner dropped them into his big saddlebags. They squealed wildly at first, but when Zorka patted them they settled down quietly on the straw with which the bags were lined.

The merchant took an orange and a shilling from his pocket. 'Zorka Ivanova,' he said gently, 'you have taken good care of your pigs, and made them worth a fine



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price.' With that he rode off in one direction, and soon Zorka and her aunt had packed their possessions and were turning in the other. Basilika went lightly, having sold her wares, but Zorka climbed the mountain with a pocketful of money, an orange, and a heartache.

## TODOR'S BEST CLOTHES

THE adventures of Todor began suddenly, one day, when he was going home from school with a strapful of books over his shoulder. He had almost reached home when a dog chasing a white kitten rushed madly from an alley. Instantly Todor swung his load of books into the dog's face. The kitten escaped up a tree, but the angry dog sprang at Todor tearing his coat and biting his arm. At that moment two men appeared pursuing the dog, one with a pistol. There was a sharp crack and the dog rolled over dead.

'He was mad!' cried the frightened men. 'You've no time to lose, Todor.'

They rushed the boy home, and within an hour, dressed in his best clothes, with his arm bandaged, he had boarded an express train for Sofia. His father was with him. In Bulgaria it is the law that when any one is bitten by a mad dog, he must go straight to the Pasteur Institute in Sofia, for treatment at government expense.

In Sofia, Todor was placed in a cottage near the hospital, where he was to live while he took the treatment. The cottage was kept by a kind woman named Martha,

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who had two boys of her own, Bogdan and Boris. There Todor's father left him and went back to his home in Sliven, a town in Eastern Bulgaria.

Then began a strange and exciting life for Todor. Never before had he been out of his home town; and now, except that he had to report every day to the doctor, he had his time to himself and a great city to explore. It was jolly to have Bogdan and Boris to talk things over with in the evening, but they were in school most of the day. So Todor wandered the streets of Sofia alone, amazed at the great buildings and the shop windows full of beautiful things. But sometimes he glanced uneasily at his clothes, for he realized that he was differently dressed from the people about him. Usually, however, he was too much absorbed in what he saw to think much of what he had on. The Sunday suit that he wore was the fashion in Sliven. It had the wide, homespun brown trousers almost like a Dutch boy's; a close-fitting sleeveless jacket of brocaded silk, in old rose, black and white, with handsome silver buttons; a crimson sash and a jaunty brown woolen cap. When he could find a flower he stuck it in his belt. In Sofia, where the men and boys dress much as they do in America, Todor made a vivid spot of color in the gray streets, and people noticed the fair-haired boy as he

wandered about alone. And in the end it was his clothes that helped him most in his adventures.

One day he happened to be passing a schoolhouse just at recess time, and stopped to watch the boys. He would never have dreamed that the great beautiful building was a schoolhouse had it not been for the game of ball that was going on. As he was watching it excitedly, the ball flew over the wall, and Todor, springing into the air, caught it dextrously and hurled it back. A cheer went up from the boys. 'Come on in and play!' they cried, for they had seen his bright garments over the wall. But just then the bell rang and the pupils stormed up the steps, Todor with them, for he wanted to see the inside of that fine school building. As the boys slipped into their classrooms, Todor was left alone in the great corridor. He was stealing away shyly when one of the masters caught sight of him.

'Ah,' he said, 'you are from Sliven! So am I!' and he invited Todor into his classroom, where the pupils were studying a great raised map of the Balkan Mountains. It was easy to see how they ran across Bulgaria, nearly up to the Danube, and down into Macedonia and Greece. When the master explained that Todor came from Sliven, his own home town, every one wanted to find it on the map. There was the famous Pass of the Wild Rose,

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too, where the attar of roses is distilled, and where a great battle for Bulgarian freedom was fought; and there was Tirnovo, the old capital of the kingdom. Todor went home much pleased with this, his first adventure.

In the midst of Sofia there is a handsome house with bright awnings and a beautiful lawn. It stands behind walls and large trees, but on one side, in a curve of the street, there is a gate that stands always open, and on each side of it a soldier in a sentry box. Over the gate are the arms of Bulgaria, for the house is the home of Boris, the King.

Todor had a great desire to see the King, and spent hours on the corner opposite the gate, waiting for him to appear, but in vain. One morning he took up his post as usual, and as he did so a young man in gray riding-clothes came down the drive on a bay horse. He was slight and kindly-looking, with a clipped black moustache. As he turned into the street, Todor, bright against the stone wall, caught his eye. He reined in quickly, and as he did so his riding-crop slipped to the ground. Todor sprang forward and handed it up to him. The man smiled pleasantly.

‘Aren’t you a Sliven boy?’ he asked.

‘I am, Sir,’ replied Todor.

‘And what are you doing here?’



'Waiting to see the King come out, Sir.'

'Well, I'm the King. Are you satisfied with me?'

'God keep you, Sir,' said the lad simply; 'I had thought to see you more bravely dressed.'

The King laughed. 'That's for the men of Sliven,' he said. Then he leaned down and shook hands with Todor, and was off.

Todor stood rooted to the spot. He had seen the King, and picked up his riding-whip, had talked with him and shaken hands!

That was adventure enough for one day. He spent the afternoon in the vacant lot behind the cottage, telling the boys of the neighborhood about it.

One day, with a feeling of awe, Todor came in sight of a great white church with gilded domes. It was all perfectly new, without a stain of soot or age, and its marble and gold glistened in the sunlight under the hot blue sky. Inside, the walls and ceilings were covered with great paintings and mosaics. Todor tiptoed over the polished marble floors, subdued by the lofty grandeur of the place; yet he did not feel like saying his prayers in it. It was all so new that it seemed to him as though God had not yet got used to it.

On his way home, passing a dusty square, he turned in at a gateway in a wall to see what might be behind it.

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To his surprise he found himself in a large, quiet courtyard, on one side of which was a tiny low church. It was so low that the roof came down almost to the ground, with only a row of small windows below the eaves. Through a covered porch, steps led downward to the church, which was mostly underground.

Todor knew that it had been built long ago when the Turks had first come into the land and had made it unlawful for Christians to build their churches more than a few feet high. There were churches like that all over Bulgaria. Often, because the people were forbidden to make the exteriors beautiful, they put all the more loving thought inside. So in this little church there were a beautiful screen of carved wood, lovely lamps and soft, faded hangings on the walls. The stones of the floor were worn by the knees of many generations.

The little church was empty now, and dusky in the waning light. Todor, feeling at home there, knelt in a dim corner. An old man came in, moved about and went out shutting the door behind him; but until Todor got up to go, he did not realize that the old man was the sexton, and that he had locked the church for the night and gone home for his supper.

Todor banged loudly and called for help, but there was no reply. He was very near to tears as he went to

the end of the porch and crouched there, wondering what he should do. The church was almost dark now, lonely and silent as a tomb. Suddenly a rustle in a red curtain, which hung across a corner, brought his heart into his mouth. He was sure that the curtain shook, and now that he fastened his eyes on it, was there not a bright eye gazing at him through a slit? As he watched breathlessly, a little old man suddenly popped out a bald head.

'So you got locked in, too?' he chuckled. He came out and stood before Todor, a dry, wheezy, ragged, old man, the beggar who sat at the church door during the day, asking for alms.

'How can we get out?' gasped Todor. 'Help me!'

'I don't want to get out,' said the beggar. 'You see, I share the Lord's House with Him.' With that he brought out a paper bag, and, settling himself on the flags beside Todor, took out a lump of bread and some cheese.

'Do you sleep here?' asked Todor, amazed.

'Yes, in summer. It is a safe, quiet place; and the Lord, being a good, kind God, does not object. He's glad to save an old man from the street.'

'Look here!' said Todor. 'Put your hands on your knees and let me get on your shoulder and see if I can open a window.'

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The old man did as Todor requested, but the windows were as tight as if they had been soldered, and an iron bar across the middle of each of them would have prevented Todor from squeezing through even if he could have opened them. The church was quite dark now, and after Todor had gone back to the porch disconsolately, the beggar lighted a candle and with a few drops of hot wax sealed it to the floor.

‘Have a pear,’ he said, kindly, wiping one on his dirty sleeve; and Todor, who was thirsty, peeled it carefully with his pocket knife and ate it with relish. The old man then began telling Todor stories of the strange eastern city in which they were staying — stories of refugees and bandits, of their secret meeting-places, and their caves in the mountains, until Todor forgot that he would have to spend the night on the cold stones. But as they were talking there came the shuffle of feet on the steps outside, and the murmur of voices.

In a flash the beggar knocked over the candle. ‘Don’t tell on me, don’t tell on me!’ he squeaked, as he flew to the curtain.

But Todor was already shaking the door. ‘Let me out!’ he cried. When the door swung open, there stood Martha and Bogdan, under the light of the sexton’s lantern.



TODOR AND THE SQUASHES





## Todor's Best Clothes

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How had they known where to look for him? It was because a policeman on duty had noticed Todor's gay costume as he turned in at the church that evening. So, when Martha sent in an alarm, the policeman told her to go first to the sexton.

As they went home through the hot, dusty night, Todor was careful to say nothing about the beggar, for he was sure that the old man would be turned out if it were known that he slept in the church.

Todor was so grateful to Martha for coming after him that next morning he said, 'Let me go to the market for you to-day. What do you need?'

'Get me a basket of peppers,' said Martha, 'and a good pink squash — I will bake it for you boys for supper.'

Todor knew how to select a squash, for he grew squashes himself. While he was choosing one, an artist passed through the market.

'What a picture!' she cried, as she saw Todor in his rich costume.

Then, because she did not speak Bulgarian, she found an interpreter to ask Todor to sit for his picture in a near-by garden; and Todor, who by this time expected something new to happen every day, sent his basket of peppers home by another boy, and tucking the pink

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squash under his arm, set off willingly, wondering what this new adventure would be like.

By means of signs and a word or two, the artist made Todor understand that she wished him to pose as if he were selecting a squash as he had done in the market. But that was not Todor's idea of a portrait. When persons had their pictures taken, they sat down and looked properly dignified. He was willing to sit against the wall and hold the squash in his lap, though to his mind a squash had no place in a picture. But that is how the artist finally drew him. And what did Todor care when he saw the five *lev* piece in his hand at the end of the sitting?

With a bright smile of thanks he raced off to buy something to take to his mother when he should go back to Sliven.

And now, if Todor could see himself in an American book, he would probably think it the greatest adventure of all.

## KOSSOVO DAY

It was Kossovo Day, the 28th of June. Since sunrise people had been dancing the *kola*. Round and round they went, holding one another's hands high in the air and stepping backward and forward with a swaying movement, as they turned in a great circle to the sound of a drum and a fiddle.

Any one could take part in the *kola* when he liked. He had only to break into the ring, seize the hands of those next to him, and fall into step; or if he had gone round until he was dizzy, he could drop out as suddenly as he pleased, and fling himself on the grass to watch the fun.

From every little hamlet in the hills the people had come in their best clothes, bringing baskets of cherries or cheese or mushrooms to sell in the town; so there were always new ones to take part when the others were tired.

Peter and Pavlo had started early, in fresh white linen suits, with gay girdles. Between them they carried a great basket of cherries slung on a pole. The money from the sale of the cherries they must take home, but their grandmother had given them each two *groschen* to spend on sweets.

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First, however, they went to the schoolhouse, where the children were assembled to march in procession to the church. Mary was there too. She had managed to come, although she had had to bring the baby with her. Mary's parents were Serbian, but she had been born in America and had gone to school there until she was ten years old. That was nearly a year ago. Then her father had brought the family back to his Serbian home to see his old mother. She had written to him in his American home: 'The war is over. I live alone. Before I die, bring the wife and child, whom I have never seen,' and she had sent money for the passage. So Mary's father had taken her mother and her across the sea. There was no little brother then. He was born soon afterwards, and not many months later Mary's grandmother had died, and left the cottage and the fruit orchard to her son. Now it seemed as if they might stay in Serbia.

Mary was not happy. She was homesick for her friends and her school life in Ohio, where she had always lived. Gutcha, her Serbian home, was a little mountain village where every one led a simple, out-door life, raising cattle and sheep and enough corn to make bread for the family. The house in which Mary lived was better than most, for it had a roof of tiles instead of thatch; the floors were of wood, and there was a built-in stove





PETER AND PAVLO



of brick and cement. But in Ohio Mary had lived in a flat with a bathroom, an ice-box and a gas stove in the kitchen. All those comforts she missed, and it often seemed to her that they did things in a poor way in Serbia. Most of all she missed Mamie Barnes. She and Mamie had begun life together in Kindergarten, and had been in the same class ever since. Here in Gutcha Mary did not go to school regularly, because of the baby. She adored him and had almost sole care of him, but that care kept her out of school.

The girls in Gutcha were shy and gentle, and stood in awe of Mary because of her fine clothes and because she spoke English. She was the only girl in Gutcha who did not own a distaff and knitting needles. All the others spent most of their time on the hillsides with the sheep, spinning and knitting the wool into stockings. They grew quiet and dreamy, and did not play in the romping way that had made life a joy in America. Mary liked the boys better. They were ready for fun, and they were not so rough and teasing as American boys. Besides, they honestly admired her.

Mary made herself ready for the Kossovo celebration with great care. She had heard that it was the Serbian Fourth of July and she hoped that there might be firecrackers and ice cream. She put on her white dress with

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embroidered ruffles, which had been bought in a department store in America, and which her mother had let down. She tied one big bow in her blue sash, topped her dark curls with another, and put on her white straw hat. She wore long white stockings and white shoes, and looked like any little American girl who was going to Sunday School. She had put a clean slip on the baby, and brown sandals with his white socks.

In the school yard Mary waited with the other children. The crowd of little girls smiled at her but stood apart, abashed by her elegance. They did not know how sweet they themselves looked under their pale yellow kerchiefs, in their beautiful homespun linen chemises embroidered on sleeves and front, their heavy skirts and silk aprons, all of such good stuff that only people of wealth could have bought them in America. They looked upon Mary as a princess, in her store-made clothes; but in reality she was a lonely little girl, longing to be friends and not knowing why the other girls did not like her. She felt that somehow she was different.

‘Hello!’ cried Peter, briskly, bursting in upon the girls, and Mary in her heart blessed him for it. The church bell was ringing now; or rather, since the bell had been carried off during the war, the priest came to the church door and banged on a pan with a great key,

which did just as well. The church was so full that none of the children could set foot in it, but they all stood in a line on the grass, and caught the gleam of the women's yellow handkerchiefs and the music of strong voices. After that they were free to go where they would and see the fun.

Mary put the baby on the grass and joined the dancers. She liked the plaintive Serbian music; but she felt that it was sad, and she longed for something rollicking and gay. How she had loved to spin about on the sidewalk with Mamie, to the rattle of a hurdy-gurdy!

She soon dropped out from the ring and sat down with a group of girls to listen to an old man who was singing and playing the *gousle*. The *gousle* is an instrument like a one-stringed fiddle. It has but a few notes and those are mournful, but when it is well played, to the airs of the old Serbian songs, there is something stirring and heart-searching in it. Mary felt it without being able to explain it to herself. She was fascinated and troubled, for though she could not understand all that the old man sang, it seemed to her to be the tale of a great disaster connected with the Plain of Kossovo.

'What is Kossovo?' she asked the girls about her. Eagerly they explained, 'It was a great battle with the Turks, in which the Serbs were beaten.'



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‘Did you say *beaten*?’ exclaimed Mary, shocked.

‘Terribly,’ said Draga. ‘The King was killed, and all the country conquered.’

‘But why, then ——’ began Mary, but stopped, afraid of hurting their feelings; evidently they saw nothing strange in making it the chief holiday of the year. Later, on the way home, she stopped short in the street with the baby in her arms.

‘We don’t seem to do things right in Serbia,’ she said with a troubled face.

‘Why not?’ snapped Peter and Pavlo, who had come round the corner. ‘What’s the matter? Why?’

‘Why,’ said Mary, confused, ‘in America they have a great holiday to celebrate a *victory*. But here we celebrate a *defeat*. I don’t like it. *We* ought to have a victory day too.’ And Mary began to describe the American Fourth of July, its flags and ice cream, its brass bands and processions and fireworks, until it seemed to the boys that the American children must live in a perpetual circus.

‘That’s grand,’ said Pavlo, ‘but every country doesn’t have the same history, and so they don’t have the same kind of fête days. Grandmother says the reason we keep Kossovo Day is because, although the Serbian *army* was beaten, the Serbian *spirit* was not. That burned

## Kossovo Day

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brighter and stronger than ever in the day of defeat. And you can *be* great, even if you don't conquer and do grand things.'

'Yes, that's so,' said Mary slowly; 'I can see that Serbia *is* great, and I'm going to be proud of Kossovo Day!'

That night Mary wrote a long letter to Mamie Barnes.

'Dear Mamie,' it began, 'We had our Serbian Fourth of July to-day. I danced the *kola* with the rest. It's easy; there are no fancy steps. But it is too slow. The women looked lovely! They had strings of great gold coins on their heads and round their necks. Solid gold! And jackets of purple and orange, embroidered with silver and green. It was just like vaudeville. And they had ribbons fastened to their caps behind, four inches wide and covered with flowers. The sash ribbons in Benton's store can't touch them. They would make lovely doll's dresses and pincushions and things for Christmas. But there weren't any fireworks. Just think, they celebrate a *defeat* here! At first I thought that was strange, but Peter's grandmother says it's because their *army* and not their *soul* was beaten. And it's better to *be* great than to do great things. I guess that's harder, too, because if you're going to *do* something you can just go

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ahead and finish it, but if you're going to *be* something you've got to *be* it all the time.

Your loving friend

MARY

P.S. I wish I could go around to Martin's Drug store and get an ice-cream soda!'

## THE FAIRY RING

It was a hot and thirsty day. In the hollow a curving wellsweep stood guard over a cottage with a thatch, which, like a rough cap, was pulled down to the two little eyes of the house. Behind it the hill rose sharply, steeped in sunshine.

A boy, leading a spotted cow, toiled up the slope, an empty basket slung over his shoulder. After him stumbled a girl with a chubby baby in her arms. They gained the top slowly and sat down under a beech that spread its horizontal branches close to the ground.

‘He gets more and more heavy every day,’ said the girl as she rolled the baby over on the grass. The boy grunted but said nothing. He was lying on his back gazing idly up into the tree while the spotty cow trailed her rope through the weeds. The girl rubbed her tired arms and fanned herself with her apron, scanning the ground with a practiced eye, for mushrooms.

‘Why, Stefano!’ she exclaimed in an awestruck voice, ‘just look at that!’

‘What?’ asked Stefano, sitting up sleepily. Ileana was pointing to something on the ground not far from

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the beech tree. A flash of intelligence came into the boy's eyes. 'A fairy ring!' he exclaimed, 'what luck!'

Among the dead leaves and short grass a circle of white toadstools had sprung up in the night. It was what the children called a 'fairy ring.' Whatever one wished for, as he stood inside it, was sure to come true.

Stefano sprang to his feet. 'I'm going to wish,' he cried, and carefully stepped over the edge of the circle. He laid his finger on his lips, thinking intently. Then he shut his eyes. 'I've wished,' he cried, exultantly, and leaped out again. 'Now you go in, Ileana.'

Ileana was flustered by the great opportunity. 'Oh! I can't think,' she said excitedly. 'Yes, I know, now; I've got it!' She stood with her bare feet close together, her hands behind her, and wished solemnly. Then she threw herself on the grass beside the baby. 'It's all about you,' she whispered, kissing him. Stefano did not hear, but the baby caught one chubby foot in his hand and laughed delightedly.

'You'd be surprised if you knew what I wished for,' said Stefano.

'What was it?' asked Ileana, full of curiosity. 'I shan't tell.'



# The Fairy Ring

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‘It’s something you’d never think of.’

‘Is it something to *do* or something to *have*?’ queried Ileana.

‘Something to *do*, *right now*, today,’ said Stefano; ‘something you never did in your life.’

‘Oh, *please*, Stefano, tell me; go on, do!’

‘And I wished it for you, too, Ileana,’ said Stefano, tantalizingly.

‘Oh, how good of you, Stefano. What was it?’ Ileana was standing breathlessly in front of him now.

‘Well,’ he said, thinking only how pleased she would be, ‘I wished we might both ride in an automobile!’

‘Oh, Stefano!’ cried Ileana in dismay, ‘now you’ve told, and it won’t come true! How could you!’

‘What did you ask me for, then?’ cried Stefano angrily. ‘Now you’ve made me lose my wish while you’ve kept yours.’

‘Well, I won’t keep it,’ said Ileana generously; ‘I’ll tell you what it was. I wished that the baby could walk, so I shouldn’t have to carry him all the time.’

‘Stupid!’ cried Stefano scornfully. ‘How could you wish such a silly thing as that, and all for yourself, too, when you might have wished for a bag of gold and we could have bought everything in the world!’

‘I was in such a hurry,’ said Ileana contritely. ‘It was

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the first thing that came into my head. But let's wish over again,' she added brightly.

Eagerly they turned to the circle, but while they had been disputing the spotty cow had trampled it into the earth.

'Now see what you've done!' cried Stefano grimly. 'And we might have had such a lucky day!'

'But I didn't do it,' said Ileana indignantly. 'The cow did it.' She was really very hot and tired, and everything seemed to be going wrong.

'Well, come on,' said Stefano, beginning to feel ashamed of himself. 'Perhaps we shall find another.' He picked up his basket and whacking the cow on the flank, moved on. With a sigh Ileana gathered up the baby and followed. His little curls and bright eyes bobbed over her shoulder as she walked. Ileana was devoted to the baby. Every morning before she went to school she washed and dressed and fed him and then laid him in his swinging cradle, which hung from the ceiling just over the end of his mother's bed. On holidays he was seldom out of her arms, though her slender, growing body often ached with the weight of him.

Following the footpath through the trees, Stefano and Ileana soon came upon Branko sitting among the mullen stalks making melancholy music with the *boojum*. The

# The Fairy Ring

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*boojum* was a great wooden horn, so long that Branko had to sit and rest one end of it on the ground. Its notes were sad and heavy, a little like the bellow of a cow. Branko loved it and blew out his cheeks until they were crimson. Whenever he came to a brook or a spring he poured water through the *boojum*, to make it louder and sweeter. 'Hello!' he cried, as the children came in sight. 'Where are you going?'

'To pick plums, if you will take care of Gemma.'

'All right,' said Branko, 'I will bring her down with the other cows.'

Stefano and Ileana spread themselves on the grass and told Branko about the fairy ring.

'I've never seen one,' said Branko wistfully; 'what a chance!'

'What would you wish for if you *did* find one?' asked Stefano.

'I don't know,' said Branko slowly, 'but I think I'd wish for a house.'

Branko was an orphan. He lived with the schoolmaster and swept the schoolhouse, besides ringing the church bells and guarding cattle on holidays. At noon he always went home with Stefano and Ileana, and shared their dinner of hot corn on the cob. The great copper dish of corn stood on the porch and whoever was

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hungry came and got some. But though Branko was welcome everywhere he had no home of his own. So now, sitting on the hilltop with Stefano and Ileana and looking down on the thatched cottages, each with its golden patch of corn or pumpkins and its haze of smoke, he felt that a home counted for more than anything else.

They could see the big house at the end of the village, its gardens and orchards, and below them the school-house. Not every village in Roumania has its school, and the children were proud of theirs, though they wished the lady who lived in the big house, and who had built the school, would not come so often to see if they were really in the classroom.

Across the valley there was a gap in the bare hills, like a piece notched out. That was the Pass. On the other side of it lay a beautiful mountain country in which was the king's palace; but beyond their own valley the children had never gone.

'Well, come on,' said Stefano, at last, 'let's look for plums.'

They came out on the highway, which was lined with plum trees thick with fruit. It lay on the ground in purple-blue patches, so that it was not necessary to shake the trees or to climb them in order to get a basketful.



SHARED THEIR DINNER OF HOT CORN ON THE COB





## The Fairy Ring

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The children could see the road as far as the Pass. It disappeared for long stretches, coming into view again close to them. Over it there was a slow but continual passing. Flocks of sheep went by on little tapping hoofs, and gleaming geese, unruffled by the heat. There were also wicker carts with small wooden wheels, drawn by black buffaloes that stretched their flat heads far beyond their bodies and lifted dumb, sad eyes to the hot sky. Women with distaffs or painted water-buckets passed, and the dust rose in clouds about their feet.<sup>1</sup>

But what was that flash? Something bright, like a great star, had shot through the Pass and disappeared in a dip of the road.

The children had filled their basket and prepared to start for home. Ileana popped a plum into her mouth and picked up the sleeping baby.

Noiselessly two pairs of bare feet fell on the dust, and the sun wove halos around Stefano with his basket and Ileana with the baby over her shoulder. A mellow note sounded behind them. How different from that of the *boojum*! Could it be a horn, so soft and sweet? They turned to look, then scampered to the side of the road, as the wonderful blinding thing came toward them — an automobile, like something in a fairy tale, for it seemed to be of silver. Ileana, her eyes fastened on it, lost her

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footing, and as it flashed by them, fell headlong with the baby in her arms, into a bed of thistles. A shriek of indignation and fright went up from the baby. The car shot past them, stopped, then backed slowly.

‘Are they hurt?’ asked some one anxiously. A man jumped down from the front seat and came running toward them. Ileana scrambled to her feet and began patting and kissing the baby vigorously. All three of the children were scratched and frightened and covered with dust, but uninjured.

‘Where do you live?’ asked one of the ladies of Stefano, who stood his ground, gazing in stupefaction at the aluminum automobile.

Stefano pulled off his tall sheepskin cap and held it against his breast, for though the lady wore a bright knotted handkerchief over her head, as his mother did, she was different and he felt very shy. ‘We live in the village opposite the church,’ he said.

‘Help them in, Bonnat,’ said the elder of the two ladies, ‘we will take them home.’

So Stefano and Ileana, with the whimpering baby and the basket of plums, were lifted into the wonderful machine. They sat on the edge of the seat, their little bare toes just touching the carpet. One of the ladies held out her hands to the baby, but he clung to Ileana.

# The Fairy Ring

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The car started with hardly a quiver. Down the road they darted, the familiar trees and houses flying past them. Stefano and Ileana, almost forgetting the other occupants of the car, held hands, their eyes wide with excitement.

‘We wished for it!’ exclaimed Ileana, at last unable to keep silence any longer. ‘We wished for it this morning, and now it’s come true!’

‘Wished for what?’ asked the lady.

‘To ride in an automobile. Stefano wished it in the fairy ring.’

‘What is your name?’ asked the lady, as she smiled down at her.

‘Ileana; I was named for a princess,’ she explained proudly.

‘That is my little girl’s name, too,’ said the lady, and Ileana noticed that her eyes were laughing. She was a beautiful lady, dressed as the women of Ileana’s village dress when they go to church. The sleeves and the front of her white linen blouse were richly embroidered; her skirt was a piece of striped woven stuff, red, pale yellow, and green, brought together in front and lapped over a white petticoat. Around her waist was a bright girdle, shot with threads of gold, and on her head was a flowered kerchief knotted at the back of her neck. From under

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it peeped crisp little curls of gold, and her eyes were blue, like chicory blossoms when the sun shines through them.

As the car swept into the village the people came running to their gates bowing and curtsying.

‘They are surprised to see us riding in an automobile,’ thought Stefano, and threw out his chest.

Their mother, washing clothes in the corner of the yard, looked up in consternation to see her dusty, disheveled children descending from the most wonderful car that had ever been seen in the village. Then, in a flash, the beautiful lady was gone, disappearing up the road that led to the big house.

‘Mother, mother, she gave us a ride! She was a nice lady! I got my wish!’ clamored the children, together.

But their mother rebuked them. ‘Don’t you know that that was the Queen?’ she said, ‘and you so dirty and bold!’

‘The Queen!’ they stammered. ‘But she wore a handkerchief over her head!’

‘And is that all you noticed? Would it make a queen of me to put on a crown?’

‘I told her I was named for a princess,’ said Ileana, ‘and all the time it was her own little girl, and she knew it!’ Then, catching a glimpse of the baby, ‘Oh, mother,’



## The Fairy Ring

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she cried, 'look at him!' He stood between the doorstep and the rainwater tub, balancing himself on his little bare feet. Then he took a step forward, swerved, dipped, righted himself, took two steps more and clutched the edge of the tub triumphantly. His mother, forgetting the Queen, ran to catch him up and kiss him.

'You see,' said Ileana, wisely nodding at Stefano, 'the fairy ring *did* work. If only Branko had wished, too, he might have his house!'

'You and Stefano wished for small things,' said their mother, 'but for the big things of life you must work as well as wish. It is through work that Branko will find his home.'

## GREAT AMBER ROAD

THE village ended where the forest began. Two great pine trees stood out like gate-posts, and between them the road ran into the depths of the wood. Along the road one summer morning came a herd of cows led by a small dog and followed by a boy in a white shirt embroidered in orange and black. He wore a round cap with a falcon's feather stuck through the band, and under his arm he carried a violin. This was Jaroslav, the village cowherd, who every day, with the help of Flick, the dog, gathered the cows of the village, led them to pasture, and brought them back at milking-time. Presently dog, boy and cows passed between the great pines and disappeared into the shadow beyond, as if into an enchanted forest; but if you had waited half an hour you would have seen them emerge, high upon the mountain-side, into a clearing of smooth, green fields.

Here a spring ran into a grassy hollow and filled it with pools of cool water where the cows liked to stand on hot afternoons. From his perch on the hillside, Jaroslav could look over the tops of the pines, far down upon the roof of his own home. It was almost the last house in the village, made of stone covered with plaster, and painted

by his mother in gay wreaths and patterns. The roof was of rough thatch on which grew patches of moss and pink flowers, which danced in the wind. The two white spots like flecks of silver were pigeons, cooing and spreading their coral feet on the moss.

The whole village was spread out below like something embroidered on a green cloth, and across it ran the thick silver thread of the river. On the farm by the bridge Jaroslav's mother must be working in the fields. Lidka, his sister, was probably putting the house in order or washing the baby. Jaroslav looked for smoke from the chimney, but there was none. Perhaps Lidka was in the garden picking beans. Yes, there was something red moving. He sprang to his feet, and putting his hands to his mouth, gave a piercing cry, as he had so often done when he saw people moving about below. There was no sign that Lidka had heard him, and with a sigh Jaroslav settled down to his solitary day with Flick.

It was vacation; otherwise Jaroslav would have been in school. He was glad to be able to earn something during the holidays, and it was not hard work looking after the cows, though neither he nor Flick dared to drowse during the hot afternoons, for if a cow wandered among the rocks she might stumble and break a leg. Jaroslav spent a great deal of time with his violin, play-

## 94 Friends in Strange Garments

ing over all the tunes he had heard and composing new ones. The one he liked best he called a Hillside Song. It began with the sigh of the wind in the pines, then a bird's song broke across it and died away. Again, the wind swept through the trees and brought the cling-clang of cow bells and the slipping march of cattle winding their way down the wood path. All this Jaroslav had tried to put into music. He had worked hard for weeks, and now he could play it smoothly.

Sometimes Jaroslav brought a book with him. He loved to read about the heroes of his own land. But having only one book, and that a heavy one, he preferred to keep it for Sundays, when he would read aloud to Lidka and her friends about the great deeds of Czech men and women. He pondered these stories as he sat alone until they became very real to him.

First, there was the story of Cech, the founder of the Bohemian kingdom. More than a thousand years before, he and his brother Lech had separated from the rest of their tribe because there was not grazing space for all their cattle. Through this very country they must have passed, and perhaps looked up at this very rock as they followed the course of the river with their thousands of cattle and horses, their families and household goods in ox-carts, seeking new homes. On and on

they trekked westward, until they came to the mountain called 'Rip,' which rises like a cone from the plain.

But what most often filled Jaroslav's mind was the story of the 'Great Amber Road,' an ancient route that hundreds of years before even Cech's time ran from Pressburg straight up to the Baltic Sea. It had been little more than a trail for trappers and adventurers, at first, and led through dark forests full of wild beasts. But over it passed many traders in search of amber, in those days a strange, new treasure, found on the shores of the Baltic. Men risked their lives to get it, as they risk them now in wild countries for gold, and when they had found it they sold it at a great price to Roman and Greek merchants, who had it carved into ornaments and amulets, and often into cups and bowls, which were studded with jewels and used in the houses of princes.

Ages before Jaroslav's time, barbaric people had broken loose across the country and stopped all trade. The Romans had disappeared and the Great Amber Road had been forgotten and stretches of it lost entirely. Nevertheless it must be there, if only one could find and follow it, and no doubt at the end there were still beds of the precious amber. Jaroslav longed to rediscover it, as men have longed to find the North Pole.



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Flick spent most of the day chasing rabbits. There were hundreds of them in the fields and along the edge of the woods. Often they came down to the village and did great damage in the gardens by destroying the sugar beets, the lettuce and the cabbages. While Flick was romping after the rabbits, Jaroslav would grow restless, put down his violin and climb a tree. Then he would glance sadly down on the little house, the white pigeons on the roof, the garden, and the twisted plum tree. Before the war, life had been gay there. His father had made a good living by cutting and hauling timber. They had had a cow and a horse and even a cart. But their father had gone away with the army; the horse and the cow had been taken by the Austrians, and though they had been paid something for the cow, it was not enough to get another. Their mother had had to buy a goat, instead. There was far less milk than there used to be, and no butter at all. When the war was over their father came back from Russia, sick, and before the year was out he died.

It had been a very sad year, and it would have been much sadder except for the baby. It was Lidka who took care of him and the house, for their mother now had to work on a big farm, and was gone all day. When Jaroslav came down from the pastures, he weeded and

spaded in the garden, because cabbages, potatoes and beans made a large part of their food.

Jaroslav and Lidka used often to talk of what they would do when they grew up. Jaroslav would have a trade and Lidka would make beautiful embroideries. Thus they would earn enough to make everything easy for their mother. They talked of the Great Amber Road, too, and tried to trace on the map where it must have run. For them the wealth of amber had the fascination that Captain Kidd's treasure has had for American boys and girls. But it took a long time to grow up, and in the meantime it troubled Jaroslav that he could find no way of earning more than he did earn by guarding the village cows. On Saturday night, when he was paid for the week's work, he never had more than six or eight crowns to take home. At such times he thought longingly of the Great Amber Road and the treasure that he felt sure lay at the end of it.

To-day was Saturday, and as he looked out over the sunny landscape he said to himself that there was no use in merely *dreaming* of the Great Amber street. He must really start on his quest if he meant to succeed. 'I'll go to-morrow,' he said, 'while Mother and Lidka are at church. I can take the week's wage with me, and when it is gone I will play for my meals.'

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He had often noticed a faint streak of roadway between the hills, running north and south, which he felt would at least lead him in the direction in which he wished to go. Now he carefully noted certain landmarks and decided to find his way to them to-morrow.

That night he received nine crowns fifty, the most he had ever had for a week's work, and he went home elated, rattling the handful of coins in his pockets.

He weeded and hoed in the garden until the great white moon seemed caught in the top of the pine tree, for he could not bear the thought that while he was away the slugs might make an end of the cabbages and potatoes.

Early the next morning Lidka and his mother went to church, leaving Jaroslav in charge of the baby. He took out his Sunday shirt of white linen and his vest of black cloth, embroidered with silver and green. Then he brushed his hair carefully. Flick sat thumping his tail. But the baby, who should have slept, waved his arms in the air and crowed in a frantic effort to lift his head from the pillow. Jaroslav took down his violin and rubbed it tenderly with his sleeve. Then he fell on his knees beside the cradle and began softly to play the Hillside Song.

The baby grew quiet and looked at Jaroslav with



BEGAN SOFTLY TO PLAY THE HILLSIDE SONG





wide, dreamy eyes, but Jaroslav turned his head away. He could not look at the little fellow and think of leaving him.

The room was very still. Only the voice of the violin trembled in and out of the shadowy corners, and presently the baby dropped quietly to sleep.

Jaroslav rose, went to the cupboard, got a large piece of bread and cheese and some cold potatoes. These he tied into a clean handkerchief. Then he took a long look about the room. There were the pendulum clock, the shelves crowded with gayly painted china, his mother's distaff in the corner, the carved chairs and the green porcelain stove, and on a painted chest several rude little figures modeled in clay and faintly streaked with color. They were so old that no one knew who had made them. Some many-times great-grandmother or great-grandfather had fashioned them centuries and centuries before, and had placed them on the hearth to bring good luck to the family. They were called *dedky*, or forefathers. Though no one believed in them any more, yet no one would think of destroying them or giving them away. They belonged in the family. When Jaroslav grew up and married he would take them with him to his new home, and perhaps for a time he might keep them on the hearthstone. He looked at them curiously now.

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What if he should take them in his pocket? They might bring him good luck.—But no, they might also be broken or lost, and that would be dreadful! He did not know exactly why, but he felt that he would rather leave the *dedky* safely at home and trust to his own luck.

He touched the money in his pocket and felt sure of success. Then it occurred to him that his mother would need the money more than ever if he were not there to earn something the next week. So he took it from his pocket and put it on the table. 'I have my violin; I shall not need anything else,' he said proudly.

On a piece of paper he wrote: 'Dear Mother: Do not worry if I don't come back for several days. It's all right. You will be glad in the end that I went.'

He turned for his cap, and Flick sprang to the door. But when Jaroslav stopped for one last look at the baby he realized that he ought not to leave him alone. Flick must stay on guard. This was harder than leaving the money, for Flick and he always did things together, and Jaroslav had counted on his company as much as if Flick had been another boy. 'Here, Flick,' he said softly, 'on guard!' But Flick could not believe it. He waved his tail frantically, snorting and scratching the door. 'No, no, Flick, come back!' said his master, and Flick, puzzled, and crestfallen, crept back with drooping

tail and stretched himself beside the cradle. Then Jaroslav picked up his violin and went out alone.

In a little while his mother and Lidka came home from church. The baby was safe in his cradle, but there was only Flick to greet them. Not until she found Jaroslav's note did his mother know what to make of his absence.

'He must have gone to Aunt Ancha for the festival at Buchlovy,' she said to Lidka. She was rather vexed that Jaroslav should have run off like that, for she would have to tell the neighbors that he would not be there to take the cows out the next day, and they would be very cross about it. She made cherry dumplings, as usual on Sunday, but neither she nor Lidka had much appetite. After dinner, hearing that the miller was to drive in the direction of Buchlovy, she decided to go with him and bring Jaroslav back.

So, while the boy was plodding along the highway, his mother arrived at Buchlovy and learned that he had not been there.

'He is probably walking slowly on account of the heat,' said Aunt Ancha. 'By the time you have rested and had a cup of coffee he will be here.'

About six o'clock Jaroslav came to a small town through which a river flowed. On one side of the river

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was a hill crowned with an old castle. By the river were factories, and since the people who worked in them were free on Sunday, the streets were full of life and movement.

Jaroslav had eaten his luncheon long ago and was hungry again, but he was too shy to play to the crowd. It was quite different from the quiet of the woods and fields, where the only listeners were the rabbits and the cows. But at last on a corner of the square he stopped and raised his bow bravely. The strains of the Hillside Song rose faintly above the clatter of the street, for the pavement was of cobbles, and people hurried by noisily. Jaroslav changed from the Hillside Song to dance tunes and folk-songs, but the crowd were going to a moving-picture show where there was a band and a gramophone, so no one paid any attention to the child fiddling on the corner. At last he stole away unnoticed, with big unshed tears in his eyes. He did not so much mind being hungry, but no one had cared for his song and that made him feel very lonely.

It was twilight on the road when he passed out of the town. He thought sharply of his mother and Lidka, of Flick and the baby, and all the dear familiar objects in the room. 'I'll walk all night, so that I can get back sooner,' he thought, and quickened his pace and went

bravely on. As darkness came down he began to feel very tired. His feet burned and his eyes were heavy with sleep. Besides, he had begun to have misgivings about his quest. The farther he got from home, the less real the quest seemed. Those of whom he asked directions had shaken their heads and said they knew nothing of the Great Amber Road.

In the blue distance a rapidly moving light appeared. It must be an automobile. There had been few automobiles during the war, but now and then one passed through the village, and Jaroslav had an almost terrified interest in them. He stepped aside into the bushes to see this one pass. Just before it reached him there was a report like the crack of a pistol; the great machine gasped and sighed helplessly, and then slowed down to a stop. Jaroslav stood in the shadow and watched breathlessly. He saw a man get out of the car, open a box at the side and take out a lantern. After lighting it, with much grunting and some angry muttering he proceeded to jack up a wheel and put on a new tire.

All this was of the most vivid interest to Jaroslav. He had never seen a man quite like this one, and he was a little afraid. The man looked like one who *knew* things, and Jaroslav longed to go forward and ask him about the Great Amber Road and what he thought of the



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whole plan; but he did not know how to speak to this stocky, gray-haired figure in the linen duster. Nevertheless, when he saw the man begin to put up his tools, Jaroslav realized that, if he did not make the effort he would soon have lost his chance forever. An idea came to him. Putting his violin to his shoulder, he began softly to play the Hillside Song. This seemed the right time and place for it, and Jaroslav put his whole soul into it.

At the first notes the man started and stood up. He neither moved nor spoke, but stared in the direction from which the sound came until it floated away over the lonely road to the dark woods.

‘Hello, there!’ he cried in a strong voice, ‘come out here!’ He held the lantern at arm’s length and Jaroslav emerged timidly from the darkness into the circle of light. What the man saw was a very dusty, tired little boy with big circles round his eyes and damp dark hair falling over his forehead. ‘What do you want?’ he demanded shortly.

‘Sir,’ faltered Jaroslav, ‘are we on the Great Amber Road?’

‘Great Grandmother!’ snorted the man, ‘we are on the road to Brno!’

‘Then I am not going north, after all,’ stammered

Jaroslav, startled by the thought that he would have to begin his journey all over again.

‘Where do you want to go?’ asked the man.

‘To the Baltic.’

‘To the Baltic! What’s the matter, son?’ he asked, looking more closely, and then, seeing that the hand which held the violin trembled, he added kindly, ‘Jump up and tell me all about it.’

So Jaroslav, who had never been in an automobile, climbed in, awestruck, and sat down on the soft leather cushions. Instead of starting the car, the man lighted a cigar. ‘Run away from home, have you?’ he asked as he blew out the match. Then Jaroslav began at the beginning, and told of his father’s illness and death, of the loss of the cow, the birth of the baby, and the necessity of his earning enough to help his mother at once without waiting to grow up; of the amber treasure which seemed to him the only resource, and of the doubts of his ever finding it that had come to him as he walked that night.

‘Did you ever hear of the Great Amber Road, Sir?’ asked Jaroslav eagerly.

‘Oh, yes, I’ve heard of it,’ answered the man with a chuckle, ‘and I know lots of men who are walking up and down it wearing out shoe leather trying to get rich quick. But you keep off that road, son! What you need

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is to learn to do something well. The world doesn't want amber cups nowadays, and in order to make money you must give people what they do want, whether it is bricks or hats or music.'

'But I don't know how to make anything,' said Jaroslav sadly. 'I would be willing to wait until I was grown up if only I could get a cow now.'

The man puffed silently for some time. Then he startled Jaroslav by asking abruptly, 'Any rabbits where you live?'

'Oh, yes,' cried Jaroslav, 'millions of them. They get into the gardens and they ——'

'That's good,' said the man, cutting him short. 'Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. I have a hat factory in Brno, and I need all the rabbit skins I can get. I'll buy the cow and you can catch rabbits for me until she's paid for. I'll take the skins on account. My agent goes through your part of the country twice a month and he will collect them. What do you think of that plan, son? Beats amber, doesn't it?'

'Can I really catch enough rabbits to pay for a cow?' gasped Jaroslav. 'Then I don't need to go to the Baltic!' he cried, shrilly, as the truth burst upon him. 'I can go home!' and seizing his cap he jumped wildly out of the car.

‘Hold on!’ shouted the man, astonished. ‘Where are you going?’

‘I’m going to walk all night so that I can begin catching rabbits to-morrow.’ Then, remembering that he had not thanked his friend, he began to stammer his happiness.

‘Get in,’ said the man tersely, ‘where do you think this car is going?’

As they sped through the night on that wonderful ride, the man told Jaroslav of a school in Brno where boys learned all sorts of trades, and not only to run cars like the one they were in, but even to make them. When Jaroslav got out on the edge of the village, and panted home in the starlight, his life had taken a definite turn.

But this story is not to tell of how the cow really arrived in two weeks’ time, or of how Jaroslav gradually paid for it in rabbit skins, or of how at last he went to the technical school in Brno. It is to tell only of his home-coming, of how he reached the house about the same time as his mother, coming from Buchlovy; of how she forgave him at sight of his radiant face; of how Lidka brought him the first summer apples in her apron, and of how, as he sat on the bench which was built around the porcelain stove, he told them of his great adventure. And all the while the baby slept, and Flick

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lay on the floor with his nose between his master's feet, and the *dedky* winked at one another in the candlelight.

*Note:* It is a fact that an ancient road led from Pressburg (now the capital of Slovakia) to the Baltic. It was also called Great Amber Road and was used chiefly by Wendish Traders. The swamp west of Pressburg marked the No Man's Land between Roman Pannonia and the realm of Slavs.



## THE LOST BROOK

WHEN Masha came to visit her cousins in the mountains, Treska thought she had never seen such beautiful clothes as those that Masha wore, and Masha thought she had never seen so sad a village as the one in which Treska lived.

She herself came from a land bright with wheat fields, where the pink and white poppies grow shoulder high, and where the little plastered houses are painted gayly and have red tiled roofs.

Here a cold rain was falling, and the mist swept low over the forests of black fir. Masha did not know that the clouds hid beautiful mountains. She saw only their gray edges, caught and torn on the tops of the dark trees. The houses were all of wood, unpainted and built like log cabins, except that they had broad eaves and high shingled roofs. The battened chinking between the logs was whitewashed, so that looking down upon the village as the girls came over the hill it seemed like a collection of striped black-and-white boxes with pointed covers.

Once inside Treska's house it was as cosy as possible, with geraniums in the windows, a pendulum clock, bright plates on the wall, and blue-and-red checkered

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coverings over the feather beds, which were piled nearly to the low-beamed ceiling. There were benches on two sides of the room, and a table set with soup plates. From the oven came the delicious smell of huckleberry buns, which Treska's mother was baking in honor of Masha's coming.

Masha was in holiday costume because she had come on the train. Treska looked her over with envy. She wore a white linen cap with a broad band of brocaded ribbon, and a frill of lace round her face. Her collar and full white sleeves were edged with black embroidery, and her bodice of crimson and green silk was trimmed with gold lace. There were bunches of yellow flowers on her short orange skirt, and with her dark blue apron heavily embroidered, and a golden and green ribbon tied about her waist and falling to the hem of her dress in front, she looked like a big bouquet.

Treska had fine clothes, too, but they were more sober in color and pattern than Masha's, and she never wore them except on grand occasions. Rather shyly she opened the big painted chest, which stood against the wall, to show Masha her own pretty things — the gold beads and netted cap, worked with disks of bright silk, and the dark cambric handkerchief, which she wore over it when she went to church, and which was so long that



RATHER SHYLY SHE OPENED THE BIG PAINTED CHEST



# The Lost Brook

III

it covered her flowered bodice like a shawl, and reached to her scarlet skirt and deep blue apron.

Though Treska went barefooted, her father was by no means a poor man. He owned large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. During the summer months he lived in a shepherd's hut across the valley, where he had a great sheepfold on the edge of the forest. Sometimes the whole family went to the hut and camped out there for days at a time. Treska loved that.

The next morning Masha's aunt suggested that the two girls should go mushroom hunting for the day and spend the night at the hut. She gave them a lunch of black bread and smoked sheep's-milk cheese and some poppy-seed cakes. They started off merrily, each carrying an earthen pot for strawberries.

It was a glorious day. Masha stood speechless at sight of jagged mountain peaks, glistening with snow in all their crevices. She had never seen anything so beautiful, so mysterious and terrible.

Below them spread the blue-black forests, reaching down to the fields where the patches of grain and corn and ploughed ground looked like a rag carpet spread over the hills. The fields were full of flowers and the mushrooms grew thickly among them along the edges of the wood.



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The pack on Treska's back began to fill out. At night the girls would sit by the fire and split the mushrooms and string them in festoons to dry.

Passing through the fields they met Janko, Treska's brother, guarding sheep, and with him Suzanne, a little girl from their own village.

'Come on,' called Treska. 'We're going up the hill to pick strawberries.'

Janko shook his head. 'I can't leave the sheep,' he said, swinging his feet as he sat on the fence rail. He was a licensed shepherd now, and very proud of the brass badge, which he wore pinned to the front of his tunic with a long thorn.

But Suzanne joined them and together the three girls climbed slowly up to a high, cleared piece of land where the strawberries grew thick and red around the old gray stumps. Across the clearing slipped a little brook as clear as the sky, but so hidden that Masha nearly stepped into it before she saw it. Along its border forget-me-nots spread a faint blue network over the grass.

Stopping to take a drink, Masha was startled to see that the brook came suddenly to an end. It did not spread into a pool, for the grass was quite dry all about it, and there was no hole visible in the ground. The brook simply disappeared! Dipping her hand into the

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water, Masha felt it drawn gently downward, so it must be that the brook went underground.

‘Oh! girls,’ she cried, ‘come here! The brook has come to an end!’

‘I know,’ said Treska wisely; ‘it must have run into an underground river. They say there are such rivers in these mountains — perhaps lakes, too.’

‘Why, it’s like a fairy tale!’ cried Masha, her eyes bright with excitement. ‘To think of rivers and lakes and perhaps whole countries underground! I wish we could go down, too, with the brook.’

After a while they wandered slowly down the hill, the sun beating hot on their shoulders.

‘Let’s go into the woods and eat our lunch,’ said Treska.

A path, which came up through the forest, led toward deep shade, and they followed it. And then something happened that made them forget all about their lunch, for turning a bend in the path they came abruptly upon a tiny hut in the woods, and close to it, in a bare wall of rock, a deep black cavern.

‘A cave!’ they cried together.

Cautiously they turned toward the entrance. They saw a vaulted space like the porch of a church, and beyond it a high wooden gate, which stood ajar. Peering

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between the bars they could make out a long hallway in the rock, which vanished into darkness, but which had, as far as they could see, a walk of planks.

‘Why,’ said Treska, ‘this must be the famous cave in the mountain that people come to see. Suzanne, we ought to show it to Masha. I’m sure you’ve never seen anything like it, have you, Masha?’

Masha, who came from a flat and rockless country, never had.

‘But it’s too dark to go far,’ she objected, shrinking back.

‘Just to the end of this hall,’ coaxed Suzanne. ‘If there’s a gate and side walls there must be something beyond.’

The three girls slipped through the gate and pattered timidly into the darkness. A continuous dropping from the roof wet their shoulders as if they had been caught in a shower, and their bare feet were soon covered with mud in spite of the board walk. It was very cold. For a time the light from the mouth of the cave served to show them the rocky walls. Then they turned a corner and felt rather than saw that they had entered a vast room, for they were staring into a darkness thicker than that of night. It was warmer here, and the ground was firm and dry under their feet, but somewhere there was

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a dropping of water with never a splash. Except for the sound, a terrible silence seemed to close in on them.

At last Suzanne could bear it no longer.

‘Hello!’ she cried nervously.

And instantly from all sides came a chorus of voices:

‘Hello! hello! hello!’

‘Oh, don’t!’ gasped Masha.

And ‘Don’t! don’t! don’t!’ cried the walls.

‘Oh, let’s get out,’ whispered Suzanne.

And from the darkness came the startled whisper:

‘Get out! Get out!’

Caught in a nameless terror, the girls fled down the dark passage, panting for the sunlight, which they could see glimmering in the distance through the bars. As they ran their courage mounted until they threw themselves breathless and laughing against the gate. It held fast! They jerked. It was locked! Panic-stricken, they gazed at one another. Then they began to shake the gate and to scream frantically for help. There was no answer. The gate had been built to keep people out of the dangerous cave. It reached to the roof, and some one had locked it while the girls had been exploring.

‘Let’s go back to the end of the passage, where it is dry,’ said Treska sensibly. ‘There may be a party of

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people in the cave now, and if there is they must come out this way. Or others will come this afternoon.'

Treska tried hard to believe what she said, but how could she tell whether anyone would come that day or indeed for many days?

'Of course those were only echoes back there, weren't they?'

asked Masha fearfully

'Of course,' said Treska.

At the end of the passage all huddled together to keep warm. In one direction they could look toward the patch of light; in the other, into the fathomless blackness of the cave. As their eyes grew used to the darkness, they could dimly make out the walls nearest them, all of white rock, clean and dry as if freshly cut.

Suddenly a sound deep in the cave caught their attention, and then a faint glow appeared, like a little cloud at a great distance. As it rapidly increased, the girls realized that a procession of people carrying lighted tapers was approaching. They came slowly along a ledge of rock so high above the girls that it seemed like an upper floor of the cave. The flickering candles lighted up glistening walls, sparkling pendants of rock and strange forms, which struggled out of the shadow; but the height of the cave was so vast that the top still hung in darkness. Was the whole mountain hollow, then, like



a melon? The procession wound slowly down a slippery staircase of wood, the guide leading the way with a big torch.

Even Masha knew that it was a party of everyday people, wrapped in warm coats and furs, who had been visiting the far interior of the cave. As they came forward, holding their lighted tapers high, more and more of the wonders of the cave were revealed; gleaming columns, low-hanging arches and lofty vaulting grew out of the darkness like parts of a fairy palace.

Clinging together at the entrance, the three little girls gazed breathlessly at their undreamed-of surroundings, and Masha, spellbound, saw what looked like a little frozen brook. It flowed down the wall spreading out in beautiful seaweed forms along its edges as if carved in white stone, and from the tip of each leaf hung a drop as white as a pearl — hung and then, with a tiny sigh, fell into the shadows below.

‘The lost brook!’ gasped Masha. ‘There it is!’

In her excitement, she had forgotten the strange people, but her voice startled them, and the guide turned quickly, throwing the light of his torch full upon the girls. Shy as wood birds, they stood dumb, and took the scolding of the astonished guide without trying to explain. Nothing mattered now. They would be out in

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the sunlight in a few minutes, and they were thrilled at the revelation of the vast and beautiful room, on the threshold of which they had sat unknowingly but a little while before.

But as the people moved on, the children hurried with them, forgetting the frozen brook and their own dark hour in their haste to get back to their world in the sun.

They shot into the light and scampered like rabbits through the woods. The crickets were chirping in the grass and the birds in the forest, and the fir trees smelt like incense in the warm sunshine.

‘Why, we are sitting on top of the cave now,’ cried Masha, as they sat down to their lunch.

‘Oh! the poor little brook!’ she sighed. ‘I wish we could let it out.’

That evening Treska’s father made a fire on the earthen floor of the hut, and Janko brought water to fill the black pot, which hung above it. Masha and Treska peeled potatoes and spread mushrooms to toast on the hot stones. From the rafters hung bunches of red peppers and golden corn, and right over the fire, tied in a white cloth, was a big cheese in process of being smoked.

‘You mean to say that you have been inside the cave?’ cried Janko, enviously, when the girls had told him of their adventure. ‘Why, it costs fifteen crowns to enter, and I have never seen it!’

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Masha told him of the lost brook, and of how they had found it again inside the cave.

‘We heard the dropping of its tears long before we saw it,’ she said. ‘I suppose it went down to explore, just as we did, and couldn’t get out.’

‘Oh, no, it didn’t,’ answered Janko stolidly. ‘It was just running across the field trying to get down to the big stream in the valley when it came to the hole and fell in. But,’ he added kindly, seeing Masha’s face fall, ‘if you feel so badly about it, we’ll go up there to-morrow and turn the course of the brook.’

Masha sprang to her feet.

‘Why, what a splendid idea, Janko!’ she cried. ‘How did you ever think of it?’

Janko glowed. ‘That’s what we’ll do,’ he said, grandly, ‘I’ll drive the sheep up there to pasture, and we’ll build a dam and make the brook run down hill on the outside instead of on the inside.’

And then, because the hut was so small, they all rushed outside, and joining hands, danced wildly in the starlight while the potatoes bobbed in the pot and the sheep bleated drowsily from the fold and the shadows of the forest crowded closer and closer around them.

*Note:* Masha and Treska were Czecho-Slovak girls. Masha lived in Southern Moraira, Treska in the Carpathians of northern Slovakia.

## MICHAEL MAKES UP HIS MIND

ACROSS the darkening furrows a boy leading a farm horse plodded home through the twilight. His shoes were heavy with mud, and his thumbs were so cold that he blew on them to warm them; for though it was April there was snow in the air.

Far down on the horizon a tiny light shot out into the dusk. Michael said to himself that Helen was getting supper and had just lighted the candle.

When he had stabled the horse in the lean-to, he opened the door of the shack. A breath of warmth and three young voices rushed out to greet him. 'Hello, Michael!' 'Come to supper!' 'We're waiting.'

Michael entered, tracking in much mud, which didn't really matter, for the floor was of beaten earth. He spread his hands to the fire. 'What have you there?' he asked, man-like.

'Potatoes,' said Helen, and lifted the lid to show the silky skins bursting like milkweed pods about to loose their fleece.

'But we mustn't eat the potatoes,' cried Michael sharply; 'we've got to save them for seed.'

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‘What shall we eat, then?’ asked Helen.

‘Isn’t there any flour?’

Helen poked the meal-bag, which hung from the rafters to keep it from the rats. It was nearly empty.

Michael’s kind eyes were sombre as the family gathered at the table. ‘Is there any thing we can sell?’ he asked.

‘Nothing but the goose,’ said Helen.

They looked at one another with troubled faces. If they sold the goose, what about the goslings that they hoped for in the spring?

‘I’ll go over to see the Friends after supper,’ said Michael. ‘Perhaps Mr. Hall will buy the goose.’ The four children had been in so many tight places that they were not easily discouraged. Basil and Katherine were soon frolicking merrily, but Michael and Helen took counsel together like old people.

There was little in the room that Michael had not made with his own hands — the rough table, the two benches, even the stove of stones and plaster, and the beds, which were boxes built against the wall and filled with straw. There was one bed in the kitchen for Helen and Katherine, and another for Michael and Basil in the recess, which had once been a cow stall; for the cabin



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was a part of what had been their father's barn before the war.

When supper was over, the candle-stump was transferred to the lantern. Michael, cutting across lots, would need a light, for the fields were full of ditches and shell-holes.

The farm lay in the eastern part of Poland, near the Russian border. During the war it had been a battlefield, and when, after a year's wandering, the children, orphaned, had struggled back to it, they had found everything except one corner of the barn swept away. Michael had made it weatherproof with timbers and stones pulled from the rubbish, and the neighbors, though shattered and poor themselves, had helped him. The land was good. Michael knew that in time he could make a living from it. But he was only fourteen, and in the meantime there were so many of them to be fed! The Friends had lent him a horse and cart the first season, and the community had given him seed. From the sale of his harvest and by working as house boy for Mr. Hall, Michael had been able to buy the horse and was now the proud owner of Boro.

The Society of Friends were a group of people who had come to Poland from America after the war to help those whose farms and homes had been destroyed. They

## Michael Makes up His Mind 123

ploughed and built, and they lent horses and tools and sold seed and supplies at a low figure. In fact, they were Friends in a very noble sense.

Michael entered the warm room where Mr. Hall sat writing in the lamplight. 'Hello, Michael,' he said. 'How is business?'

'Not so good,' answered the boy soberly. 'You want to buy a goose, Mr. Hall?'

'No, I don't believe I do, Michael. I should like to sell some goose eggs, instead.' Then, seeing Michael's blank face, he added, 'Sit down and tell me why you wish to sell your goose.'

Mrs. Hall brought in a bowl of apples, and while Michael ate one he told about the seed potatoes and the empty meal sack.

'It would be very foolish to sell your goose, though,' said Mr. Hall. 'If you set her on a dozen eggs they will be worth ten times as much as she is worth, by Christmas.'

'I know,' said Michael, heavy with misery. 'I could get along, myself, but there are the children.'

'You have your horse, haven't you?'

'Oh, yes, old Boro. He's good and strong. I have been ploughing with him all day.'

'How long shall you need him?'

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‘To-morrow I shall finish all the land I can plant this year.’

‘Well, I’d like to hire Boro when you don’t need him. I can use more horses. Will you take a sack of meal and some goose eggs as part payment?’

Michael went home across the cold fields with a light heart, and the next day the spring work seemed to begin in earnest. Helen made pancakes for breakfast, Michael finished ploughing and began to sow, and Katherine and Basil filled a box with hay, as a nest for the goose.

Only a few days later Mr. Hall came to Michael with grave news. ‘My boy,’ he said, ‘I am going to leave here at the end of this month, and I want you to come with me.’

‘Going away!’ cried Michael, stupefied.

‘Yes, we are opening a Farm School at Kolpin. It is for orphaned boys, like yourself, who have land, but who are too young to work it. By the time they are eighteen or nineteen and are ready to go back they will know how to make the most of what they have. I wish you would come with us.’

Michael grew red with excitement.

‘I’d like to go all right,’ he said, ‘but of course I couldn’t leave the farm and the children.’

‘Michael, you are very brave, and you did fairly well

## Michael Makes up His Mind 125

last year, yet you made hardly enough to carry you through the winter.'

'I have planted more this year,' said the boy confidently.

'Yes,' said Mr. Hall, 'and each year you will plant a little more until you are working all your land. But if you knew something about modern farming you could make it yield at least four times as much as it does.'

'How could I?'

'You would know what to plant in a field one year in order to get good corn the next; which soil is good for wheat and which for potatoes; and how to make old land young.'

'I'd like it mighty well,' sighed Michael, 'but I must stick to the farm and the children. Mother wanted us to stay together.'

'I would not ask you to come if we could not take the children, too.'

'But,' cried Michael in alarm, 'you said it was a place for orphans; I promised mother I would never let the children go to an asylum.'

'It is a school, not an orphanage,' said Mr. Hall. 'The children would be happy there.'

'Not if it's an orphan place,' said Michael, and shook his head stubbornly.

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Mr. Hall could not move him, and at the end of the month went away sadly, leaving Michael behind.

The boy took up his work with a lonely heart, but he did not lose courage. He loved every inch of his farm; the windy furrows against the sky, with the long-tailed magpies stalking over them; the clump of white birches in the hollow; the purple woodland and the gray wind-mill where he would carry his grain in the autumn to have it ground into flour. Even the little hump of a cottage, which he had built with his own hands, had grown dear to him; but most of all he loved his sisters and his small brother, and he had the joy of keeping the family together, as his mother had begged him to do.

One day in early summer, when the crops were pushing up bravely and the girls were weeding the turnip patch, Mr. Hall again stood before them. He had come over from Kolpin for things that had been left behind, and was to return that afternoon.

‘Can you give me some dinner?’ he called to Helen, and she ran to put the kettle on. When Michael came home, at noon, his heart gave a bound of joy. Not only was he glad to see Mr. Hall, but he was proud to show him his summer fields.

‘Yes, Michael,’ said Mr. Hall, ‘you have the making of a great farmer, but you must remember that land in





BASIL HERDING GEESE



## Michael Makes up His Mind 127

Poland is no longer farmed as it was before the war. You will have to compete with modern methods. Now that we are well started at Kolpin, you must bring the children and make us a visit. I wish you would come to stay, Michael. Think it over!' But Michael could not make up his mind.

'If it were not an orphan place ——' he began.

'Michael,' said Mr. Hall seriously, 'your mother would wish you and the others to go to school. She would want the girls to learn to cook and sew and keep house as she did. Do you think it is right for you to keep them from it? Come back with me to-day, all of you, and at the end of a week let the younger ones decide whether they will stay or not. That is only fair. Try it!'

Michael, who was beginning to see that perhaps he had no right to decide the question alone, put it to vote.

'Let's try it for a week,' said Helen; and Katherine and Basil went wild with excitement.

After dinner they all climbed into the farm wagon, which was half filled with hay, and rolled away merrily behind the spanking grays. Toward evening they came to a white house at the end of an avenue of big trees, where people with kind eyes and kind voices were waiting for them; but the first thing that they saw as they

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drove in was a stork's nest on the roof of the barn. Three angular little storks settled down for the night beneath their mother, while the father stork stood beside them, dark against the melting gold of sunset.

'A stork's nest,' cried Katherine; 'this will be a lucky place!'

'That is not the only nest here,' said the House Mother, 'come and see the others.'

The first nest was a long, brown house full of big boys who were just sitting down to a supper of rice with peas, black bread, cocoa, and apples. Here Michael was to live.

The second nest was a square little house like something in a story book. Here Helen and Katherine were to live, with Basil. The floors were as smooth as silk. At the windows hung daffodil curtains, which made the rooms seem full of sunshine. There were little white beds, one for each child, with sheets such as these children had had when their mother was alive; and in the kitchen was a great stove, with a chimney-hood like the one in their old home.

Every one at the farm school was busy. Michael went out to the fields or to the barns with the other boys. Helen made beds and washed dishes. Katherine shelled peas. All passed a part of each day in the schoolroom. Even Basil learned to count the geese that were placed

## Michael Makes up His Mind 129

in his care. He knew that there were eight in all, so if there were only five in the path there must be three behind the hedge.

That week Michael watched the children closely. He knew that they were having better food than he could give them, and when he saw them starting gayly for the blackberry patch with their tin pails, or saw Helen in a clean pink apron watering the foxgloves and hollyhocks with a happy smile, he nodded wisely. In his own heart he longed to stay, for he had seen enough of the well-tilled acres on the river Bug to know that here he could learn to be a successful farmer.

‘What shall I do with my farm if we stay?’ he asked Mr. Hall.

‘You may take a week in the spring to plant grain and another in the fall to harvest it. We can use Boro here.’

At the end of the week Mr. Hall called the family together. ‘Well,’ he said, ‘which is it to be, go or stay?’

‘Stay!’ they shouted joyously.

Michael added, ‘If mother could see us all here I know she would be glad.’

‘Every one is glad,’ said Mr. Hall. ‘Look!’ and he pointed toward the barn, where, on the roof-tree they saw the old stork rise on his toes and clap his beak and his wings with great content.



## ELENA'S CIAMBELLA

As Elena scampered over the road, the town clock struck a quarter to four. Elena had an important engagement. Her mother had sent her to draw a jar of water from the public well outside the town; and on the way back she was to stop at the bakery to get her *ciambella*, which was to come out of the oven at four.

Now a *ciambella* is an Easter cake, but it is different from any other cake in the world. It is made of flour and sugar and olive oil, and tastes like a crisp cooky. If you are a girl yours will be in the form of a dove; if a boy, in the form of a galloping horse, with a handle of twisted dough from mane to tail to carry it by. Whichever it may be, an Easter egg will be baked inside the *ciambella*, and the cake will be stuck full of downy feathers, which wave and look festive.

Elena's cake was an unusually large one, in the shape of a dove, of course, with wings and tail feathers and an open beak. It had been brought to the bakery on a tray by Elena's mother, and left to be baked.

As Elena panted up the hill she saw Giuseppa outside the *cabane* or hut, helping her mother with the washing. The baby stood in a high, narrow box where he could



HER MOTHER HAD SENT HER TO DRAW A JAR OF WATER



look on and yet was out of mischief, and there he waved his arms and shouted with excitement as the suds flew.

'Where are you going?' called Giuseppa as Elena passed.

'To get my *ciambella*,' cried Elena. 'Have you got yours?'

Giuseppa shook her head. 'I'm not going to have any,' she said.

'Not this year,' added her mother, looking up; 'perhaps next. But we are going to make the *cabane* clean for Easter.'

Giuseppa and Elena looked at each other sympathetically.

'Too bad!' exclaimed Elena. 'Well I must hurry. *Ciao*, Giuseppa.'

'*Ciao*, Elena.' (A parting that is pronounced 'chow' and means good-bye.)

When Elena reached the bakery she found a great crowd there. The four o'clock cakes were coming out of the oven. Far back in the glow Elena could see her own *ciambella* on the stone floor of the oven, larger than all the rest, its feathers waving tantalizingly in the heat.

In the midst of the women and children stood the cook, with smooth black hair and huge earrings of gold and pearls, which reached to her shoulders, and with a

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clean flowered kerchief tucked into her corset. She was bare-armed and brown, and held what looked like a great pancake-turner with a very long handle. With this she could reach into the depths of the oven, which was as big as a pantry, and scoop out the cakes, even those quite at the back. There were all sorts of cakes, large and small; some were cookies, and some were big loaves made with almonds and honey and eggs. The whole place smelt delicious, and every one stood on tip-toe to see his own cake pulled out of the oven. Finally Elena's *ciambella* was put into her hands, still hot and fragrant, though she had waited for it to cool somewhat on a tray.

Just then a little girl named Letitia came in to ask for coals with which to light the fire at home. The cook raked a few from the oven and put them into the pot of ashes that Letitia carried. Covering them with her apron, Letitia went out with Elena.

'Just look at my *ciambella*,' said Elena proudly, as she carried it carefully on both hands. 'Isn't it a beauty?'

'Yes,' said Letitia, 'I am going to have one, too. It will be baked to-morrow. Of course,' she added, 'it won't be quite as big as yours, because Maria will have one and Gino will have a horse. But they'll all taste the same.'



'Just think!' said Elena, 'Giuseppa isn't going to have any at all.'

'Not any?' cried Letitia. 'How dreadful! I never heard of a house without a *ciambella*! They must be very poor.'

'Yes, but at school Giuseppa always has a clean apron and clean hands. She helps her mother a lot, too. Well, chow, Letitia.'

'Chow, Elena.'

The girls parted, and Elena walked proudly through the streets, carrying the cake as though in a procession.

She climbed the outside stair, which led to her house, built over the donkey stable. Her mother had gone out to the fountain to polish her pots. The big dim room, with its brown rafters and the dark furniture ranged along the walls, was very quiet. A patch of sunshine made a bright spot on the stone floor, and in it a white pigeon drowsed. It did not move, even when Elena stepped over it. The little girl looked down and laughed at the comical resemblance between the pigeon and her *ciambella*; but her own pigeon sat up very straight and stiff, because it had an Easter egg baked inside it.

Elena set the cake carefully on a big chest while she struggled to open the bottom drawer of the bureau. There she laid the cake in a nest of clean aprons and

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handkerchiefs, to rest until Saturday afternoon, when it would be taken out to be blessed. Not until Sunday morning would its fine feathers be plucked and its crisp wings bitten off.

The *ciambella* safely lodged in the drawer, Elena climbed on a chair and got a piece of bread and some sheep's cheese from the cupboard; then she ran to find her mother.

The next days were very busy. Every one in Sezze was cleaning house frantically before Easter. Washing hung over every balcony, the yellow and flowered handkerchiefs and aprons making the whole street gay. Every bit of furniture was polished, windows were cleaned, curtains washed and floors scrubbed. Above all, the copper water jars and basins were taken out to the fountains and scoured with lemon and sand until they shone like red gold. There was the warmth of spring in the air after a cold winter. On the slopes below the town the almond trees were in blossom and the snow had disappeared from the mountains, the tops of which were drifted with clouds.

Far below the town a fertile plain — the Pontine Marshes — stretched out to the sea. Often the plain was covered with mists, for it was full of swamps that bred mosquitoes and malaria. People who lived there did so

at a risk. Often they came up to the town sick with fever, and sometimes they died; but the gardens and fields produced such fine vegetables and brought so much money from the markets in Rome that men kept on. There were no houses down there, so far as the eye could see, only *cabanes* or huts thatched with reeds from the marshes and in the distance looking like haystacks. Giuseppa's father worked on the flats, and the family lived in a *cabane*, but it was high up on the mountain, just below the town, where land was cheap.

It was true that Giuseppa's father was very poor, but he was also saving his money to build a little stone house to take the place of the *cabane*. He told the children that when they had the house they should also have a *ciambella* every year. In the meantime Giuseppa helped her mother to make the *cabane* as neat as possible for Easter. It was a poor place indeed; round, with a thatched roof, which came to a peak at the top. Inside there was only one room, and that had an earthen floor and no windows. There was no opening except the doors, and no chimney.

When the fire was built on the floor in the middle of the room the smoke struggled up through holes in the roof; but the family lived out in the sun most of the time, and went into the *cabane* only when it rained or was

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very cold. As Elena went back and forth for water those busy days she sometimes looked over the wall and saw Giuseppa hanging clothes on the bushes or beating a mattress; and there was smoke coming through the roof as if water was being heated. Elena felt very sorry for Giuseppa, and every night prayed God to send her a *ciambella*.

Giuseppa, not knowing this, felt bitter toward Elena and jealous of her great, feathered cake. Also she herself prayed earnestly for a *ciambella*. On Easter morning she made herself as fine as she could, and went to church. She combed back her short hair and laid a white embroidered handkerchief over it. She had small gold earrings and a coral necklace, and she put on a light blue cotton apron and her corn-colored handkerchief with roses, over her shoulders.

On her way home Elena came running after her. 'Oh, Giuseppa,' she asked earnestly, 'did you get a *ciambella*?' 7

'No, I didn't,' said Giuseppa, and passed on.

Elena was much disappointed. She had prayed hard, and felt that a cake should have been sent to Giuseppa. Then suddenly she stopped short in the street. 'Why,' she said, 'perhaps God hasn't got a *ciambella*, and I have!'

She went home thoughtfully and opened the drawer and looked a long time at her *ciambella*. Then she ate her dinner of boiled chicken, and artichokes fried in batter. After dinner Elena took the cake lovingly in her arms and carried it into the street. It was the last time it would be on parade. She passed the groups of children, all munching *ciambella*, and made her way to Giuseppa's hut. Giuseppa was outside, feeding the baby from a bowl of bread and milk.

‘Happy Easter!’ cried Elena.

‘Happy Easter!’ replied Giuseppa, her eyes fixed on the cake.

‘I brought my *ciambella* to eat with you,’ said Elena cautiously, ‘and you may hold it, and, oh, Giuseppa, you may have the egg!’

Giuseppa grew scarlet. ‘I never saw such a beauty,’ she said, ‘and what feathers!’

‘I stuck them into the dough myself;’ said Elena, ‘that is why there are so many.’

‘Do you know,’ said Giuseppa shyly, ‘I *prayed* for a *ciambella*.’

‘And you got it!’ cried Elena triumphantly.



## AN EVERYDAY STORY

MICHEL trudged home to supper. All day he had been forking heavy, slippery seaweed into carts. His arms and legs ached, but he had earned five francs. That would be something to tell Uncle Ives when he got back from his cruise to the Bay of Biscay.

The seaweed, washed up on the beach by a month's storm, was community property, prized as fertilizer and as bedding for the live stock. The mayor had appointed a day for each family to gather its share, and Michel had been hired by an absent citizen to harvest his part of this strange sea crop.

As he started home, the world, hitherto wrapped in a golden mist, began to darken; and looking at the sky, Michel was surprised to see a great mounting cloud, which had not been there a few moments before. As he opened the cottage door, it was nearly jerked from his hand by a sudden gust. He dropped his wooden shoes at the door, and entered the kitchen in his felt slippers.

His grandmother sat near the fireplace, giving little Martha her supper. On the hearthstone knelt Guen.

There was an appetizing smell of frying fish. Now and then a drop of rain came down the chimney and splashing into the pan, made a great sizzling. The wooden shutters, closing with a bang, shut out the last glimmer of twilight. 'Go out, Michel, and fasten them open,' said Grandmother; 'we will keep the lamp in the window to-night.'

'I am glad Uncle Ives got off the coast before the storm came,' said Guen. 'Don't you suppose the Jeanot is in the Bay of Biscay by this time, Grandmother?'

'God knows,' sighed the old woman. She turned the fish in the pan, Josef came in red-cheeked and muddy from a game of ball, and they had supper.

The bed in which Michel and Josef slept was built into the wall and heaped with pillows and bedding. It had sliding doors, which could be closed, so that it looked like a handsome carved wardrobe; but usually they were left open, showing the pretty chintz curtains. That night when Michel, sitting on Uncle Ives's sea chest, pulled off his stockings, the storm was raging around the little stone house like a howling wolf. But the four children slept like dormice under their feather beds. Only grandmother, peering between her curtains, watched the flickering lamp all night long.

Michel had never been beyond the smell of the sea,

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and there was brine in his blood. He knew that sooner or later he, too, like his father and all his forebears, would become an Iceland fisherman; in fact he lived for the day when, as *mousse* or cabin boy, he would take ship under his Uncle Ives for the Arctic Circle; for Michel lived in the town of Paimpol, in that part of Brittany called the *Côte du Nord*. From this port every year in March a fishing fleet sails for northern waters, to return in August for a few weeks' respite before starting for the Bay of Biscay to buy salt for the next year's catch. Toward September those who have not slipped forever into the silence of the North are back in their homes for the cozy winter months, there to make ready for a fresh voyage in the spring. But there are always some for whom there is only a tablet in the gray church by the sea, like the one for Michel's father, 'Jules Karadoc, lost on the Iceland Coast'; and under the darkened rafters hangs the model of many a brave little ship gone down.

For the people of Brittany storm and shipwreck are things of every day. They work and eat and sleep as usual, but the women, who do not go to sea, learn to sigh with the wind and to pray as they work.

The next morning, after Josef and Guen had gone to school, Michel, taking a pail, ran down to the beach for

clams. The sun was shining again, the tide was out, and only the banks of seaweed and the driftwood flung high on the beach gave any sign of last night's storm.

Michel dug busily for clams, detecting their presence with the keenness of experience, and then with a full pail started homeward. As he skirted the town, the clack of many wooden shoes hurrying over the cobbles caught his ear. A crowd was running through the streets. Full of curiosity, Michel ran too, headlong for the square in the center of the town.

The wooden shoes were still thumping in from all sides, and about the telegraph office pressed a silent group of women, the tragedy of the sea written on their faces. No one spoke. Only the rapid click of the telegraph key came through the open door. Then a man appeared, holding high a bit of paper.

'Susanne Allanic,' he called; and added quickly, 'Your man's safe!'

Susanne, standing on the edge of the crowd, with a baby in her arms, threw up her head, gave a cry, and broke into sobs.

'What's the matter?' asked Michel sharply, for Allanic was one of the Jeanot's crew.

'The Jeanot's gone down,' said a woman breath-

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lessly; 'four men are missing. We don't know who they are.'

Michel stood stunned. The sunlight seemed suddenly wiped from the world. 'The Jeanot's gone down! The Jeanot's gone down!' kept pounding through his brain. He knew he should have to tell his grandmother, and in just those words; he could think of no others. At the gate he met her. Her face was as white as his own, and he knew that she had heard.

'The Jeanot ——' he stammered, trembling.

'Yes,' said his grandmother, "but Ives will telegraph.' And she took the pail of clams from him and went into the house to make the chowder.

They all knew now that last night's storm was but the spent end of a great tempest, which had swept the coast from Spain northward, and that the Jeanot, struggling to keep to the open sea, had been forced on the rocks below the Bay of Biscay.

From obscure Spanish towns the belated telegrams kept coming in all that week. Three bodies had been washed ashore, and eleven men were accounted for; only Ives Karadoc was missing. Some sailors had come home with the story of the wreck. After the break-up of the Jeanot, Ives had been seen clinging to a floating barrel. That was the last known of him. So the days dragged on, hollow and dark.



People went back to their daily affairs, and began to talk of other things than the wreck of the Jeanot. But in Michel's home things were not as before. Laughter had died away from the hearthstone. A knock or a strange step on the flags set their hearts beating, and every night the little lamp burned in the window.

'Ives has been picked up and taken to some far country,' persisted Grandmother. 'We shall hear, we shall hear.' But one morning Michel, finding her all in a heap near the fireplace, weeping with her apron over her head, knew that she had lost hope.

He himself could not give up, and with hot protest in his heart he started for the headland beyond the village where one could look far out to sea. It was the point where they had all gathered to watch for the Iceland fleet when it had returned less than a month ago, the Jeanot leading, her sails agleam in the setting sun. And now the Jeanot had gone down! Why, she was as familiar and friendly and dear as the kitchen itself! And Uncle Ives was such a jolly young uncle, so full of understanding! The children adored him. Last year at this time they had begun to fill the sea chest for his first voyage with the Iceland fleet. Together they had saved their pennies to buy sweet, sticky ginger and chocolate

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and biscuits to tuck into the corners as surprises. Guen had knit socks and hemmed towels. Grandmother had made the underclothing. Finally, together, they had fashioned the tarpaulins, which were to keep Uncle Ives dry in the worst of storms. Grandmother had cut and sewed them on the machine with three and four rows of stitching. Then they had dipped them in oil; and the children had dragged them out to the hillside and spread them on the bushes to dry, weighting them down with stones, turning them to the sun and the wind, bringing them out each day anew and taking them in at night. At last the three coatings of oil were dry, and the suit was light and tough and waterproof. How they had laughed when Uncle Ives had tried it on, and had pulled the huge stocking feet of the trousers over his boots! Before he sailed he had asked them what they wished him to bring them from Iceland, just as the father of the three daughters in the fairy story did. They could not say, not knowing what things there might be in Iceland; but Ives had brought walrus teeth to the boys, a sack of eiderdown to Grandmother, and dolls in quaint native costume to the girls. And then, just as they thought they had him back again, he had started off with the Jeanot to buy salt for next year's catch!



THEY HAD WAVED GOOD-BYE TO HIM



They had waved good-bye to him, and watched until the Jeanot was a white fleck beyond the islands. Now all that was bright in life seemed to have been dashed to pieces on the black rocks of Biscay.

Michel pushed his way through the gorse, which pricked thickly about him. At the summit of the headland stood a great stone cross, its carvings worn by centuries of wind and brine. Here women who had waited long for men at sea came to pray. On the step, with his cap pressed to his breast, Michel knelt. His heart was too full to pray in words. Besides, what could he say if God did not already know how much he wanted Uncle Ives back?

Below him spread the bay, a sweep of pale gold. Tiny islands, rose and lavender, or velvety black where the seaweed clung to them, studded the surface like gems. A row of twisted pine trees followed the line of the opposite shore.

After a while Michel stood up, and shading his eyes, gazed seaward. There where the straits led into the open channel lay the Isle of Breha, and round its point came the Paimpol fishing fleet returning for the night. As they drew nearer Michel could distinguish each boat by some well-known mark as one can tell a neighbor's cow by a crumpled horn or the white patches on its



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flanks. There was the high curved prow of Raoul's boat, a black and green trawler. There was the orange patch on Jean Baptiste's gray sail. Among the well-known boats there was a stranger with tawny sails and a bulky hull larger than the rest. What boat was that? Pricked by a boy's curiosity, Michel forgot his grief. If he raced back by way of the beach he might reach the wharf almost as soon as the boats reached it.

Slipping and crashing down the hillside, he came to the beach and thudded over the sands in his wooden shoes. When he reached Paimpol the boats were already moored. A crowd had gathered, and Michel could see confusedly that sailors were carrying someone on a stretcher from the strange boat.

A cheer went up from the crowd. Michel, dodging under elbows, squirmed his way nimbly to the inner circle. He could see a form wrapped in blankets on the stretcher, around which the men were pressing eagerly.

'Is it a rescue?' he asked, for such things often happened.

'Hello, old pal!' cried a familiar voice, and Michel stood speechless. The darkness seemed to fall from him, and the world to become real again, all his broken courage coming back to him.

‘Hello, Uncle Ives!’ he cried, his voice high with excitement. ‘I didn’t believe you were dead.’ And then all at once he knew how terribly afraid he had been. ‘But Grandmother did,’ he continued. His chin quivered, and great tears fell on the wharf.

‘Look here, Michel,’ said Uncle Ives softly, ‘you cut ahead and tell her there’s nothing the matter with me but a broken leg.’

And so Michel was the swift forerunner of the triumphant procession that wound from the landing to the Karadoc cottage.

No one heard a word of Uncle Ives’s story that night. Grandmother sent them all to bed earlier than usual, and closed the door on eager neighbors. But the next day in the sunny garden, where bees bobbed in and out of the honeysuckle, they heard of the dark night when the Jeanot had gone down in a crash of wind and foam, and of the miracle by which Uncle Ives, clinging to an empty salt keg, had been drawn away from the rocks by the ebbing tide. He had been unconscious when a fishing boat had picked him up the next day, and one leg was broken from a blow of which he knew nothing. The fishing boat was bound to Honfleur on the French Coast, but had changed its course to bring the wounded man home. The dear ship Jeanot was mourned with

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many tears. Devoutly Michel and Josef carved a model of her, and rigged it. They took it to the little gray church by the sea, where, with innumerable others, it hangs in the dim shadows of the roof, a thank-offering for the safe return of Uncle Ives.

THE END







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